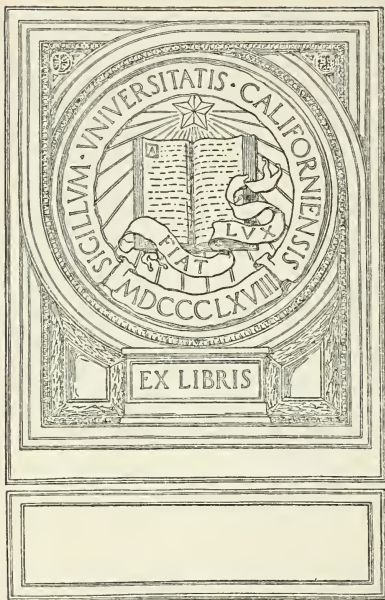



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LETTERS FROM ITALY





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Miss William F. Lusk
Dear

Dear Mr. F. Lusk,

September 1873.

LETTERS

FROM

FLORENCE, ITALY, IN 1866



By

MRS. HARRIETTE MATTEINI

31

PUBLISHED IN 1893

BY HER DAUGHTER

FANNY WINCHESTER HOTCHKISS

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INTRODUCTION.

The following letters, by Mrs. Harriette Matteini, are published for the sake of her grandchildren, that they may possess something from her gifted pen. They were written at a time of great political excitement in Italy, when Victor Emmanuel II. though King of Italy, did not reign over the whole of his kingdom. Venice and Rome were still lacking to his crown. Cavour, the distinguished statesman, had passed away, and Garibaldi, with his red-shirted followers, was still fighting the battles of the nation.

This introduction, compiled from different authors, is given in order to throw some light upon the very interesting period in which these letters were written. Mrs. Matteini, long a resident among the people she loved and admired, recognizing their faults, appreciating their virtues, heartily sympathized with them during their long and weary struggle for national union and liberty. To understand the Italy of that period, we must glance back, and trace the causes, which in 1866, led to the events described in the following pages. Since the fall of the great Napoleon, the countries of Europe had been in a constant state

of agitation. Previous to this event, the French nation, had through her armies, carried new and radical ideas into the countries she had invaded, and brought under Napoleon's sway.

The events of 1796 and 1798 had aroused in the Italians new views and hopes in regard to constitutional freedom. The principles of the Code Napoleon had been introduced into Italy, and into nearly all the German dependencies of France. Then came the overthrow of the great conqueror, and the restoration of the dispossessed princes. These monarchs, instead of pursuing the liberal policy of the invader, went back to the old régime. They oppressed their subjects, allowed them no religious or political freedom, and for a time darkness seemed to hover over the continent, and absolutism reigned supreme. But the taste for liberty could not be so easily destroyed. The people had found out what freedom meant—the seed, so freely sown, permeated and vivified the nations of Europe, and though kings and emperors sought to stifle this new and powerful element in the souls of men, it could not be crushed. The germ lay dormant for a season, to be quickened from time to time and manifest itself in those frequent uprisings, conflicts and revolutions, that shook Europe during the first part of the 19th century. The people had been enlightened—the nations of the Eastern Continent could not again relapse for any long period, into the

condition of the 18th century. But to turn to Italy—Metternich regarded that country, as well as Germany, as his especial province. Similar conditions existed in both. That country, like Germany, was a conglomerate of numerous separate, mutually independent states, whose princes had estranged their subjects by their restoration policy. These princes had now as colleague, the Emperor of Austria, the latter having taken possession of Milan and Venice—both valuable parts of the Napoleonic inheritance. Francis Joseph was determined to substitute his influence for that of France, and from upper Italy, to rule the whole peninsula. With this end in view, Austria must spread in Italy the principles of the Holy Alliance. She must repress with all her might all aspirations after freedom, any attempts at written constitutions or liberty of the Press, all longings for national unity. But the question whether the German long-suffering would be imitated by the passionate, impulsive inhabitants of Italy, whether they would adapt themselves to the old feudal relations again, still remained to be answered. The transition from the French rule to that of the old dynasties, was far sharper in Italy than in Germany. In the latter country, the pre-existing governments had maintained themselves under Napoleon. In Italy not a single sovereign had remained upon his throne, but a good and wise government had been given to the

people and under it the country had prospered. Had the returning royal families retained the good of the French institutions, they might have won the love and allegiance of their subjects, but instead, they connected themselves immediately with the old conditions, and only allowed such institutions to remain, as lent power and splendor to their authority. Consequently dissatisfaction spread among the people, and soon reached a high point. There was no lack of organization among the different elements of opposition, for the league of the *Carbonari* (charcoal-burners) had definite political aims. In the year 1819 it was estimated that there were about 60,000 members in all Italy, their headquarters being at Naples. The independence and unity of Italy were the aims of this society, but whether this object should be attained through a constitutional monarchy or a republic, was still an open question among them. Such was the state of Italy in the early part of the 19th century. Revolutions and riots all over the peninsula followed each other in close succession. The *Carbonari*, lacking the full coöperation of the people, utterly failed in their attempts. Metternich and the Austrians conquered, and their influence became the controlling power in Italy.

In 1831 revolutions and war broke out again, but the Italians were as yet no match for their enemies, therefore all their hatred was directed against foreign

rule, as the only obstacle to the freedom and unity of the peninsula. Joseph Mazzini, then an exile in England, took care that the national spirit should not be buried beneath material interests, but should remain ever wakeful. Then came the years 1848-49, and all the struggles in central and southern Italy stood in close connection with the events of those years in upper Italy. The hopes of the nation were centered on Sardinia, and her King Charles Albert, but they were doomed to disappointment until Victor Emmanuel II. ascended the throne in 1849. He, with Cavour and Garibaldi, became in later years, the upholder of Italian freedom and unity, and under him Italy was united into one powerful kingdom. But this was not accomplished until 1870. Napoleon III., who in 1856 was the recognized arbiter of the destinies of Europe, no longer held in 1866 the balance of power in his hands. His influence was on the wane, but with intrigues and artifices he sought to strengthen his position. On the 28th of May 1866, in conjunction with the cabinets of London and St. Petersburg, he extended in Vienna, Florence, Berlin and Frankfort, invitations to a peace conference to take place in Paris.

This conference was to consider the important questions of the moment, namely the disposition to be made of the Elbe duchies, the Italian claims on Venetia and Trentino, and, in so far as it concerned

the European balance of power, the reorganization of the German Confederation. Prussia, Italy, and the Diet accepted the invitation. Austria would only accept on condition, that every combination looking to the enlargement of the territory, or the increase of the power of any one of the invited states, be excluded from the discussions. England and France declared the conference impossible under such conditions, and the plan was abandoned. The diplomatic game which Napoleon was playing, was full of perfidious double-dealing. He desired a war between Prussia and Austria, hoping that it would be of long duration, greatly weakening both parties, and that it would finally result in forcing Prussia, of whose defeat he felt confident, to accede to his plans of conquest. It was in this hope that he urged Prussia into war, assuring her of his neutrality, and giving his consent to the Prussian-Italian alliance, concluded April 8th, 1866. By this treaty Italy pledged herself to stand by Prussia, in case, within three months, the latter became involved in war, on account of her reform measures, while in the like event Prussia promised the King of Italy her assistance in the acquisition of Venetia. Bismarck would not consent to the further demand of the Italian minister-president La Marmora that the Trentino should be annexed to Italy, since that involved the cession of territory belonging to the German Confederation.

These negotiations were conducted with Napoleon's full cognizance, not a single step being taken without his consent. This alliance was to tear Venetia from Austria, and keep a part of the Austrian army busy on the Mincio. In seeking Prussia's friendship, Napoleon wished to carry out his own plans for the aggrandizement of France, by changes in regard to Belgium and the Rhine frontier, thus gratifying the pride of the French nation and securing his own dynasty upon the throne. As soon however as he perceived that his proposals to Prussia were not favorably entertained, he used every effort to secure her defeat, as a means of rendering her more amenable to his demands. For this purpose he endeavored to undermine the Italian alliance, confirm Austria in her warlike mood, and obtain from her the most favorable terms possible for France. Thus at the instigation of France, May 5th, 1866, Austria offered the Italian cabinet Venetia, free of compensation, on the sole condition that Italy should remain neutral in the approaching struggle between Austria and Prussia. The temptation was great, but the breach of treaty was too flagrant; the offer was therefore rejected, and the alliance with Prussia remained unbroken. Then followed the German-Italian war, the most important one which had occurred in Europe since 1815, on account of the territorial changes which took place in the map of Europe.

Victor Emmanuel declared war against Austria June 20th, 1866,—then followed the defeat of the Italians at Custoza (June 24th) and the naval defeat at Lissa (July 20th). These disasters might have proved fatal to the cause of Italy, indeed would have delayed for many years, if not destroyed the object of the nation's endeavors, a united Italy, had it not been for the brilliant and continued successes of their allies, the Prussians, whose arms were victorious everywhere. Led by Prince Frederic Charles, Gen. Herwarth von Bittenfeld and the Crown Prince of Prussia, they proved themselves more than a match for commander-in-chief Benedek, and the able generals at the head of the Austrian army, defeating them in every encounter. Finally July 3rd, 1866, occurred the hard-fought battle of Sadowa or Königgrätz, in which the Prussians utterly and completely routed the Austrians, and almost annihilated their army. This battle virtually decided the campaign, though the fighting still continued in Italy and Germany. July 13th, Archduke Albert assumed the chief command of all the Austrian armies, and Benedek was deprived of his office. The emperor of Austria could think of no more skillful means to check the victorious advance of the enemy towards Vienna, than the cession to Napoleon, before all the world, of the province of Venetia, which had already been ceded secretly, and the use of his intervention for the restoration of

peace. Accordingly on the 5th of July, the cession of Venetia to France was made public. The emperor was convinced, that if Venetia became a French province, Victor Emmanuel could only win it by yielding to Napoleon's wishes. Austria would then have her whole southern army to use against the Prussians. Immediately after the emperor of Austria had offered Venetia to Louis Napoleon, the greater part of the Austrian army in Italy was withdrawn to the Danube, to be employed in fighting Prussia, and the Italians, led by Gen. Cialdini, met with but little resistance to their new advance into Venetia. The volunteers, under Garibaldi, were to coöperate with Cialdini's army, by invading south-western Tyrol. But Victor Emmanuel would not recognize the cession of Venetia to Napoleon, nor did he wish to accept from that monarch a province, the Italians were eager to win at the point of the bayonet. Napoleon endeavored, by the offer of Venetia, to dissuade Italy from the further prosecution of the war, and hoped to induce both Italy and Prussia to conclude an immediate truce, but neither of the allies would follow his advice. Unable, therefore, on account of the Prussian-Italian alliance, to use the Austrian gift in the way he had intended, Napoleon let matters take their own course. It seemed as if war between Italy and Austria was again imminent, when Victor Emmanuel, finally realizing the great risk of engag-

ing single-handed in a war with Austria, yielded at length to the counsels of Napoleon and King William, and withdrawing his claims upon the Italian-speaking Southern-Tyrol, accepted Venetia from the hands of France. A peace between Austria and Italy was signed in Vienna, October 3rd, 1866, and the iron crown of Lombardy was at length handed over to Victor Emmanuel. On the 16th of October, Venice was evacuated and on the 18th Napoleon, through Gen. Lebœuf, surrendered the city to a committee of the common council, and the Italian troops marched in. The vote upon the union of Venetia with the Kingdom of Italy, took place on the 21st and 22d of October, 651,758 persons voting in its favor, while only 69 voted against it. November 4th this result was communicated to the King in Turin by a Venetian deputation. In reply Victor Emmanuel said: "To-day the foreign rule has come to an end. Italy is created, but not yet completed. The Italians must defend it and make it great."

November 7th, 1866. Victor Emmanuel entered Venice. The dream of the old *Carbonari* of a united Italy had almost reached its fulfillment, for isolated Rome could not much longer hold out against the march of the century. To the victors of Sadowa, Italy owed the acquisition of a province without a single victory, her army and her navy having been completely defeated at Custoza and at Lissa; such

success in disaster has not a second example in the history of war. But in spite of this fact, it must be acknowledged that for years the Italians had been fighting bravely and indefatigably for national union and independence, and though in their last struggle, others had gathered the laurels they longed for, yet through defeat and suffering a nation had been born, worthy to occupy the new kingdom allotted to them.

Three great men stand forth conspicuously at this transition period of Italy's history—Victor Emmanuel, Cavour, Garibaldi. The first for his steadfastness and unwavering faith in the cause he had espoused and the people over whom he reigned, the second, for his remarkable sagacity in the conduct of affairs, the third for his unswerving devotion to the cause of liberty, his untiring battle against wrong, and patriotic love of his country. These three men were united in one noble purpose, the deliverance of their country from a foreign yoke, and at last their efforts were crowned with success. They achieved what they had undertaken—United Italy was no longer an idea, it was an accomplished fact, and Metternich's famous saying that "Italy was but a geographical expression" was utterly refuted. Cavour will always stand at the head of Italy's great statesmen—Victor Emmanuel as Italy's wise king—Garibaldi as Italy's patriot warrior—the hero of the present and of the future. All contributed to mould the nation's policy.

Either alone would have failed, but the threefold cord none could resist. At their united call the people arose, shook off their fetters, and stood noble and free, a nation among men.

LETTERS.

FLORENCE, ITALY, May 25, 1866.

IN spite of all the talk about a Congress, though Italy and Prussia are believed to have consented to its reunion, every one feels and knows that the war is a certainty and will soon be a reality. The wish for the war grows more profound and intense every day, and its demonstrations more enthusiastically ardent. The volunteering fever has become a frenzy, that it is difficult to keep within prudent bounds, and the popular sympathy keeps pace with it. The doors of the various offices of enrollment are surrounded by crowds of young men, hours and hours before they are opened, and in some instances so great has been their impatience to enter, and their eagerness to be comprised in the first hundred who will leave, that the doors themselves have been liter-

ally forced in, and the departure of the detachments has been accompanied with such tumultuous, unbridled marks of the popular sympathy, that the government has felt compelled to suspend them for a few days ; they are, however, to be resumed to-day. The disinclination that the government displayed in the first instance for the aid and coöperation of the volunteers seems to have disappeared, and it is reported that the King has consented to the formation of several new battalions, some say as many as thirty or forty, in order that none who apply may be refused, and it certainly would be a pity to deny the Italian youth the free exercise of the only virtue, that centuries of a bad government and a perverted religion have left them. To those who know the national character well, it is evident that the only hope for the future regeneration of Italy, lies in the development and proper direction of her patriotism. It is her one surviving virtue, the root, from which the plant of national honor must spring, and God be praised that in one virtue resides such divine

vitality, that it can become the prolific source of every other. But these are too stirring times for moralizing. The war is at our doors ; nor kings, nor emperors, nor cabinets, nor congresses, can prevent its passing their threshold. One only among all these principalities and powers could ever have prevented it, but even he is powerless now. Yes ! Napoleon III. had once that power, but the will was wanting. He wanted the war, he plotted for it, he meant to have it. He it was who turned a cold ear to the first proposal of a congress, thus giving time for warlike preparations and the exasperation of the popular sentiment ; he it was who acquiesced in it only, when too late for any useful purpose, he, whose silence encouraged, whose oracular and mystical words stimulated, and he it is, who, if the truth were known and all the mazes of his tortuous policy revealed, will be found to have instigated and originated the war ! And what wonder ? By what other means could his hatred of the treaties of 1815 be gratified ? But what matters it to Italy who originated

the war? Her business is to profit by it. Nor will she be inclined to quarrel with a policy, that affords her an opportunity of vindicating the national valor and obtaining her territorial integrity. So VIVE Napoleon III, since his name must, per force, be blended with those of patriots and princes who better deserve the honor. Nor will it be the first time that an unworthy head has been crowned with unmerited laurels. Nevertheless, if Italy and Prussia were wise, they would reject his further interference, and, strong in their union, fight their own battles and win their own victories, without his costly and dangerous coöperation. But why do I speak of Italy or Prussia or any other nation fighting undisturbed, unaided and unhindered, their own battles, when new and unexpected events are happening every day, that render such liberty of action impossible. The battle of a nation, such is its solidarity now-a-days with every other, is a world's battle; and even now the news arrives, that in consequence of the unanticipated arrival of Prince Charles de

Hohenzollern in the Danubian Principalities, Moldavia has been simultaneously occupied by the Turks and Russians! Here is a combination indeed, little short of portentous, and it looks, too, as if the portent had not been wholly unforeseen, for we know that the conference engaged upon the affairs of the Danubian Principalities has only thus far reached a purely negative character, seeming thus disinclined to settle it independently of the other questions that agitate Europe.

26th.—One is the sport and the victim of telegrams, and it appears as if their only object was to contradict each other and increase the general confusion. To-day we learn that it was all a mistake—the news of yesterday, that the Turks and Russians had entered the Moldavia; they haven't entered it at all, though probably will, for sometimes the mischievous telegrams are prospectively true, and it will probably be found so in this case, as it is not to be supposed that a sovereign, duly and lawfully elected by the people, would be allowed to take quiet possession of his sceptre

and crown, unmolested by those, who have nothing whatever to do with the matter. Certainly not ! In the meantime, we are threatened anew with a Congress. Still a Congress ! This sword of Damocles is still suspended over our devoted heads, and they do say it really will be ; not to accomplish anything in the way of peace-making, of course, but as a sort of general-responsibility safety-valve, I suppose. Well, let them talk it out if they like, and what a delightful instance of harmony between war and diplomacy would be afforded if, while the pen ceded Venetia, the sword took it !

I have just learned that in consequence of the completion of the twenty battalions decreed by the government, the enrollments will be suspended until all the volunteers have left for their several headquarters at Bari, Barletta, Varesi, and Como. It is greatly regretted by people in general that the government persists, in spite of the efforts of the distinguished ex-Garibaldian officers, Mosto, and Misson, in refusing the formation of the Italian Carabineers and a body of Guides. A

manifesto was published yesterday, requiring all those citizens, who owned three horses, to offer one to the government, those who had six, two, and so on, in proportion to the number of horses possessed by each individual. In case of refusal, force will be resorted to. Menotti Garibaldi arrived here last evening. It is reported that the celebrated deputy Brofferio is dead. Rumors of Bourbonian and other plots are rife to-day. The reactionary party feel that now or never is the time, and arrests have been made and correspondence discovered, implicating, in some instances, some of the most distinguished names in the kingdom, among others that of Cesare Cantù, the celebrated novelist and deputy. It is pleasant to think that all their efforts will be vain, though aided by a self-styled friendly diplomacy.

FLORENCE, ITALY, June 1, 1866.

In spite of the conflicting assertions of letters and telegrams, it is even yet uncertain whether the governments to whom the conference has been proposed, have or have not accepted it, and in the meantime the three powers, France, England and Russia, continue to act as if persuaded either of its inutility or impracticability, and Austria is amicably occupied in rendering herself every day more odious to the Italians. The forced loan of twelve million florins, just ordered in Venetia, and *only* in Venetia, the cruel decree of Toggensburg, which punishes with death the Venetian who refuses to fight his countrymen, the spoliations of every sort, of which that unhappy province is the victim, have exasperated still more the already burning hatred of the Italians to their oppressors, and increased to such a degree their contempt for a government, that dares thus insult every sentiment of nationality and humanity, that were Austria to-morrow to offer Venice, with-

out compensation or ransom to the Italians, they would not willingly accept it. They want not only Venice, but *revenge*, and consequently rejoice over every new instance of the bad faith and impotency of diplomacy. But it is not alone the Italians who lay little stress upon its pretended efforts. Prussia and Austria and the German States are equally incredulous, equally regardless. Benedek has already left Vienna for his new quarters-general at Olmutz, and in one of his orders of the day, he expresses the hope that his army will consider the property of an enemy's country as sacred, and the Archduke Charles, in one of his, recalls the souvenirs of Custoza and Novara. King William, in spite of his reported disinclination to the war, makes patriotic speeches, proclaiming it his duty to defend Prussia and *her* sacred soil. Francis Joseph announced his intention of protecting *his* sacred soil against unjustifiable aggression. The King of Wurtemberg hesitates at no sacrifice for the defence of *his*, and all together, kings, emperors and princes

invoke God's blessing and protection on the several *sacred* causes they espouse. Russia looks on, England advises, and France—*hates the treaties of 1815!* Is anything but war possible, and must not all this sacred soil receive a bloody baptism, ere the plant of a permanent peace can take root? We at least in Italy think so, and no rumors of congresses or conferences disturb our tranquillity. We hear that Austria will sell, sell for money, Venetia. We do not believe it, we know that she holds it as the apple of her eye, as all stolen fruit is held. It is said that King William does not really want the war, only that firebrand Count Bismarck; it matters not to us, wishing or not wishing, we are sure that he will have to fight; again, and again we are told that Garibaldi is still at Caprera and the red shirts not yet made; we know it, and we know too that Garibaldi bides his time, and that with or without red shirts, his volunteers will fight; it is reported that M. Lazard has had a talk with Napoleon III. and is persuaded of his pacific intentions; we laugh at

the pacific intentions, and the talkative goose that proclaimed them, and rely about as much upon his penetration as we should upon that of his illustrious prototypes of Strasbourg. In short, knowing what we know, feeling what we feel, we can afford to be patient and bid Italy go on her way rejoicing. Apropos of Garibaldi, I read in a newspaper the other day, "La Guerra" that Major Frecchi, aide-de-camp of the king, had gone to Caprera, to transmit to Garibaldi his commission of general of the 5th corps d'armée, bearing at the same time a letter from his Majesty, that moved that tender-hearted hero even to tears. It seems that owing either to the sterility of the island or from poverty (the latter probably), Garibaldi had been obliged to sell his battle-horse, and the King hearing of it, ordered it to be bought at any price, and carefully kept in the royal stables, and the letter that touched Garibaldi says: "General, when you come to the Continent you will find your horse saddled and bridled as he was at Varese and Calatafime." Last week Garibaldi's great

friend and admirer, Alexandre Dumas, was here on his way to join him, when he shall come upon the Continent to take command of his volunteers. He intends following his army for the purpose of writing a history of his campaigns. As is the case everywhere, the charming novelist is excessively fêted in Florence, and a few evenings since, being recognized at the Theatre Pagliano, was obliged to endure a noisy and enthusiastic ovation, that stopped the performance for at least ten minutes. All sorts of amusing stories are told about him, and among other things it is said, that the illustrious writer has, like another Alexander, sighed for a new world to conquer, and more fortunate than his predecessor, has found one. His last, and some say, his most brilliant conquest is the kitchen. Alexandre Dumas has turned his attention to cooking, and it is doubtful whether his fame as poet or cook will longest survive; at all events his salad à la Dumas is destined to immortality, but one should not partake of it, who has not the certainty of living and dying

with its author! Once and once only tasted, hopeless of future repetition of the enjoyment, the salad à la Dumas, becomes an unsatisfied longing, a tantalizing dream, a vain, unsatisfied aspiration that makes the rest of life a blank. "Eat often, or eat never," should be inscribed upon the fatal dish. His other culinary efforts are, I am told, not less marvelous, and last week at Mme. Batazzi's, the wife of the former prime minister, he cooked a dinner of a dozen courses, every bit of it himself. The bill of fare had the name of the illustrious cook upon its reverse, and he left the table between each course, to attend to the proper dishing up of every delicacy that composed it. I am told that the result was perfection; and his friends say, that let the worst come to the worst, the author of "Monte Cristo" has only to set up a *trattoria* to redeem or make a fortune. Speaking of cooks, reminds me to tell you, that among the sufferers by the prospective war, the cooks of Dresden are not the least to be pitied. Saxony, it seems, has no salt

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mines, and obtains that commodity from Prussia by a treaty, concluded in 1828 and renewed in 1864, by which the King of Prussia agrees, for a certain price, to furnish sixteen pounds of salt to each Saxon stomach. The salt is delivered *en masse* to the Saxon government, which has a monopoly of the sale. As soon then, as Baron von Beust's refusal to disarm was known, the commotion in the lower regions became extreme, the different bureaus for salt were besieged by all the servants in Dresden, and though the panic was soon calmed, many of the cooks provisioned themselves for at the least an eight months' siege, while trusting that Congress would take the matter in hand, and compel Prussia to respect their rights.

June 2d.—La Marmora's departure for the conference seems certain, consequently that of the other prime ministers. Garibaldi's arrival is expected upon the Continent about the 4th or 5th of the month. Report says that he is impatient to leave Caprera and has written to the King signifying his wishes.

FLORENCE, June 5, 1866.

The congress, conference, conversation—whatever you will—is not likely to meet. Not because Count Bismarck has to stay in Berlin, to keep King William up to the mark, not because Prince Gortschakoff has the gout, not on account of Austria's bad faith nor Italy's disinclination—but simply because Louis Napoleon has determined that it shall not. The pipe of peace, at which he has been puffing away for the last four weeks, is now about to be broken and thrown away. It has served his purpose long enough. It has filled all Europe with its smoke, and darkened the eyes of its diplomatists, while the deadly tomahawk of war, that is to be hurled at the treaties of 1815, is being sharpened for the conflict. Yet even now, while its lurid gleams are flashing across the horizon, the portent is misunderstood, and many, perversely or wilfully blind to the events they are witnessing with their own eyes, still believe that Napoleon III. wants peace, and is

making every effort to secure it. It is indeed the common opinion that the change in public opinion and the obstacle to an amicable "conversation" and peaceful solution, are to be found in the susceptibility of Austria to a phrase, a phrase, too, that accommodating diplomacy has already modified to suit its fastidious scruples. Austria objected to the expression, "question Italienne," and the more elastic one of "différence Italienne" was substituted, but the concession of tweedledum for tweedledee was not enough, and at last, she has *spoken out*. She will only accept the conference on condition that all the powers represented, pledge themselves not to require a modification of frontiers, or territorial aggrandizement; and the Diet, adopting her programme, has sanctioned her pretensions by declaring that the question of Holstein and that of the federal reform is no concern of the neutral powers, and that the Italian question also is the affair of the Germanic Confederation. In face of such declarations what would a Congress find to do?

what *could* it find to do? Austria, it is plain, does not believe in one, and the delay that the project imposed, being no longer necessary to her designs, she has thrown off the mask, while sparing Louis Napoleon the necessity of removing his. He can still proclaim, thanks to this hostile and involuntary cat's-paw, his moderation and disinterestedness, and the war may now with propriety begin; "*Les convenances*" have been respected. So admirably indeed, has he played his part, that even at the last supreme moment the game of negotiations and communications has been continued, and many an honest, credulous soul still believes, that Gortschakoff may consent to part with his gout, Bismarck with his ambition, La Marmora with his patriotism, Napoleon with his nature, and *Austria with Venetia*; and that it needs but a friendly "conversation" at Paris to settle everything to the satisfaction of everybody, and transform the Garibaldian red-shirts into comfortable winter petticoats. They don't believe, not they, that Europe is on the eve of a uni-

versal upsetting and overturning, brought about by his Imperial Majesty, Napoleon III, for the purpose of strengthening and aggrandizing France, or rather himself and his dynasty, at the expense of the Universe, if necessary. Heaven grant that Italy and Russia may not share this incredulity, and that they may have the wit to overreach him, and declining his aid and intervention, succeed in localizing a war that otherwise would be universal. The news of the day is that an Austrian decree of the 28th has proclaimed martial law in Venetia, Istria and the Southern Tyrol. Another of the 30th authorizes Gen. Benedek to suspend the right of individual liberty in the fortresses under his command, and to try the citizens before the military tribunals. These tyrannical measures indicate plainly the intentions of the Cabinet at Vienna, and would be even more absurd than wicked on any supposition but that of war. It is generally thought that this state of suspense cannot be prolonged much beyond the 15th, when Italy will probably

take the initiative and attack. A letter from the frontier says: "We are within half a day's march of the Italian territory, occupied by the Austrians, and while waiting the result of the Congress, the two armies increase their ranks every day. Parks of artillery are formed, the soldiers exercised in shooting and marching, and every preparation is being made for a speedy commencement of the campaign." The report is that the Generals Pettinigo and Angioletti, one the Italian War Minister, the other the Minister of the Navy, will leave their respective portfolios, and take, each of them, the command of a division of the army. Menotti Garibaldi has been appointed Lieutenant Colonel of the Italian volunteers. I hear that a part of the corps d'armée of General Cuchiari has passed the Oglio, though his headquarters are still at Cremona, and that Durando, whose headquarters are at Lodi, has traversed the Chiese. The two corps have not yet formed a junction, though near enough to each other to close the passes that lead from Mantua and

Peschiera to Lombardy. The projected Congress has given time for the fortifications of Pola and Dalmatia to be greatly strengthened. The number of Venetian emigrants, that have joined the volunteers, is about 3000. There is talk of a 5th corps d'armée composed of four divisions. According to the Journal l'Europe, General Benedek has established a printing press at his headquarters. Major Junck, one of the most distinguished military writers, has the direction of it, and already several journalists from Vienna and a correspondent of the Times, have been authorized to follow his staff.

FLORENCE, July 11, 1866.

To see sights one must go to see them, and though to parody Dr. Johnson's observations about the Hebrides, many are worth seeing, but few worth going to see, yet duty is duty, and having promised to write you about the Pitti Gallery, I felt obliged to start for that

place, even with the thermometer at 90 in the shade. Such being the case, in spite of my profound conviction of what was due to a free-born American woman, I felt that I could hardly expect a visit from the *Madonna della Seggiola*, or a friendly morning call from the Niobe family, had foreign etiquette even permitted those residents to pay the first visit, and so resolving magnanimously to waive ceremony, I put on my bonnet preparatory to an expedition to the Pitti palace, the residence of the first named of these distinguished females. It was near noon when I started, and oh! how hot it was! The air was living, glowing flame. The sunbeams beat down upon my devoted head, pierced my parasol, penetrated my bonnet, and darted into my very brain, melting even the few ideas contained in it. I felt them softening, my pet ones, my most fondly cherished, my woman's rights notions, and negro suffrage, and ere long they lost their rocky consistency, their immovable steadfastness, and gradually dissolved into a weak solution of expediency and dastardly

compromise. I was ready to sell my birth-right for a mess of pottage, and would have sacrificed on the instant my hopes of voting for a President at no far distant day, for the poor shelter of a gourd. Weak, strong-minded woman that I was! I kept on my way, however, ashamed to be baffled by an enemy millions of miles distant, and who a few hours hence, would not so much as dare to show his face, and crossing the piazza almost at a run, soon found myself in that glorious temple of art, the Pitti Gallery. Do not be alarmed though, I am not going to inflict upon you a description of its treasures. Too much has already been said about what no description can describe, no copy represent, no heart feel by the echo of another's beatings. Only, if it indeed be true, that "a thing of beauty is a joy forever," then the Pitti Gallery is a perennial fountain of joy, for its beauties are inexhaustible. I wandered hours and hours through this wilderness of beauty, and if I only ask you to pause with me before one, or at the most two of its

celebrities, I shall expect that lively gratitude, felt only for bores mercifully not inflicted. I might—remember, I might if I pleased—hurl Raphaels, Titians, Guidos, Salvator Rosas, and Murillos by the dozen at your devoted head, but I won't please; so pay attention, while I only bestow upon you a small, a very small piece of my mind, concerning two Mary Magdalens that particularly attracted my attention. To critics more competent I leave the analysis of the glorious coloring, the inimitable grace, the harmony of composition of the one, the sublime contrition, the pathetic feeling that characterize the other, and limit myself simply to the moral aspect of these world-famed pictures. Ah, Mary Magdalen—Mary Magdalen! beautiful art thou in thy tears, and lovely in the desolation that a Titian and a Domenichino have made immortal; but will thy tears never cease to flow? Shall thy nose eternally be red? and must those golden tresses forever draggle about thy shoulders? Will the world never, like thy Saviour, pardon thee, and permit thee

to put up thy back-hair in a comb, and do it in a waterfall as other decent women do? I am weary and indignant at the woe-begone pose these old-time painters impose upon thee. The sentiment that inspired them was false, and it has perpetuated also an uncharitable, unchristian spirit. Mary Magdalen, repentant and forgiven, should take her place, not shame-faced and apologetically at the feast of life, but partake as joyfully of the good things God and man have provided, as Mary Madonna herself! Yes, 'tis time that she should hold up her head in the world with the best, aye, the very best. Are not her sins forgiven, and angels singing hallelujahs over her redemption? and, if so, if she be fit company for the celestial hosts, and would be received with open arms into the courts of Heaven, who are you, pray, that exclude her from your drawing-rooms, and draw up your white-washed garments as she passes by? There, I have said it; it has long been on my mind, and I advise coming Titians and coming Domenichinos, especially

if Americans, to adopt the bright idea. Let their immortal Mary Magdalens be clothed in purple and fine linen,—let her wear a cashmere upon her shoulders, and a tiara of diamonds upon her brow, they will not misbecome her, nor by any means be misplaced.

Filled with such reflections, I left the Pitti Palace, and strolling through the Via Guicciardini, entered upon the Ponte Vecchio. I generally avoid that famous bridge, for like a true woman that I am, I dearly love jewelry, and the sight of all the beautiful and unattainable things that beset one on both sides, has made it for many a long year, a very “bridge of sighs” to me. I crossed it therefore quickly, trying not to look about me, and was only once beguiled into stopping before the loveliest, oh the loveliest cross of amethysts and diamonds that eyes ever beheld! a cross fit to be set in the firmament, among the stars, for the conversion of an empress. My eyes watered as I looked upon it, and I was silly enough to enter and ask the price, though I knew it was about as unattainable

to me as the stars it rivalled. “*Venti-cinque mila franchi, Signora.*” Five thousand dollars! *only* that, and to say that there are women who could buy that beautiful gem as easily as I could a pair of gloves! *Oimè!* well I suppose that they do, even those same happy women, have their cross to bear.

Feeling almost insulted by the shopman, I left his shop, and this time did walk straight on, looking neither to the right nor to the left, until I came upon the Lung 'Arno, where to my surprise, I observed that the windows upon the river and those along the length of the Mercato Nuovo, were being rapidly draped with the national colors, while the national flag was being hoisted in every direction. “What is the matter, what has happened?” said I to a young lad who had just been engaged in the latter operation, “is there any good news?” “Good news, indeed, I should think so—Garibaldi has driven the Austrians out of Lodrone. *Viva Garibaldi!*” and before I could ask for particulars, he was out of sight. I had only, however, to go to

the next corner, as far as the palace of the Municipality, to have the good tidings confirmed. A telegram, posted upon the walls, informed me, not only that the volunteers had entered Lodrone, and driven the Austrians at the point of the bayonet across the Dazio, but also that Cialdini's corps d'armée the 4th, had crossed the Po, and compelled them to evacuate Rovigo, which they did after blowing up the fortifications that protected the city, burning the bridges and spiking the guns. Well might the boy shout, "Viva Garibaldi!" without waiting to answer my questions. He might, too, have added, "Viva il Rè," and "Viva Cialdini," but he did not! Those names don't seem to come so naturally to the popular mouth, and let who will win the battles, the red-shirted hero is sure to reap all the laurels.

FLORENCE, August 24, 1866.

The paramount interest for the moment, even in Florence, is the state of the Emperor Napoleon's health, some hoping, some fearing, a fatal termination to the malady from which he is suffering. It is said that he is far more seriously indisposed than the French journals are willing to allow, that his spine is fatally diseased, and his mind in consequence so weakened, that from one day to another his policy cannot be predicted by those most conversant with his designs and wishes. In the meantime he makes every effort to hide his situation and keep up appearances. A few days since he paid a visit to the Empress Charlotte at the Grand Hotel, where he remained about an hour. He ascended the stairs with difficulty, holding with one hand firmly on to the banisters, and resting heavily with the other upon an ivory-headed cane, and a person who met him as he was going up, said that he looked ten years older than he did two months ago. Returning to St.

Cloud, he got out of his calèche and walked a few steps in the avenue of the Champs Elysées, in the Bois de Boulogne, but for all that, the French correspondent, from whom I learned these details, said it was impossible to look upon his face and not perceive the ravages of deep-seated disease. Report says that in his interview with the Empress, Napoleon gave her clearly to understand, that France had done all that was possible for Mexico, and was unwilling to make further sacrifices in her behalf, though possibly some understanding might be come to with regard to the last loans—the plan proposed being that of converting Mexican debts into French *rentes*; all of which, of course, means a renunciation of his project of a Latin Empire on our continent, and a grand political *fiasco* for this man of colossal abortions. Whether or not he will be more fortunate in obtaining the compensation that he demands, for graciously acquiescing in triumphs he could not prevent, is uncertain, though probable; at all events the compensation is stoutly insisted

upon, though from a note in the *Moniteur* of the 21st, it is not to be taken from the neutral states, and Belgium consequently escapes, while the question of the Rhine remains unsettled. In the meantime while all the world at Paris talks of peace, the eventualities of war are not neglected, and the most intense activity is displayed in the fabrication of a new kind of cannon, to which an extreme importance is attached, and so fearful is the war department of the secret of its invention being known, that a foundry has been established for the express purpose of their construction in the *haras* of *Mendon*, each workman having his own specialty, and the workmen of the various parts being forbidden all communication among themselves. These rumors and other similar ones from the capital of France, keep the Italians naturally in a state of disquiet and ferment, for whether it is true or not that when Napoleon III. stamps the earth, all Europe shakes, certain it is that Italy still trembles in her *boot* when the Imperial foot comes down, and as most of the

officers in the Italian army are boiling with rage at the armistice, and indignant at the bare mention of peace, they rejoice at anything that promises a renewal of war, by which, what they fancy their lost honor, may be retrieved. On the contrary the Italian people are now pretty well reconciled to accomplished facts, and desire that the peace, since they must have it, may no longer be deferred. In the meanwhile the absence of their morning drachm of war news is sensibly felt by the excitement-loving Florentines, and were it not for the Pagliano theatre and Ciniselli's equestrian troupe, and one or two other minor open-air theatres, I don't know how they would manage to get rid of the *ennui* occasioned by the sudden reaction of their overwrought sensibility.

Pagliano draws crowded houses every evening to hear *Don Giovanni*, and the fact that a tenth part of the net profits is given to the fund for the wounded in the war, heightens undoubtedly, its attractions. The performance itself is respectable, nothing more, with

the exception of the baritone Stella. He is charming, to the last degree, and it is a pity that he should not be better sustained. Such as it is, however, we must accept it until the opening of the Pergola, which will not be before Autumn, when we are promised *L'Africaine*. Of course, *nous autres*, such of us as still find ourselves in Florence, suffer extremely from such a *bourgeois* state of things, for of course you know that the Pagliano theatre is essentially that of the respectable middle classes, and our delectation can only properly be taken in "the season" and at fashionable resorts, though I have been assured, that if we could condescend to breathe an atmosphere tempered by vulgar joys and respired by common lungs, we should find it not unwholesome after all, and possibly that it resembled, in all important respects, the higher if not the purer element that expands our own patrician hearts; for certain it is that the people who throng the streets of, *to us*, deserted Florence, seem to have some object in living, and to find existence an

agreeable condition, and what it may be, and why it is so, would, perhaps, be worth our investigation.

Victor Emmanuel is still at Padua, making excursions into various other parts of his new dominions, and enduring with commendable resignation a popularity that increases with every day of his stay. The theatres have been reopened the first time for years in honor of his visit, and when he shows himself at one of them, the applause is enough to drive one frantic. Flowers are flung at him, pocket-handkerchiefs waved, tears shed, with *evvivas* that storm the heavens. The boxes are gay with the national colors; the women wear them in their hair, on their dresses, everywhere where a bow or a loop or a streamer is possible, and those who pretend to look below the surface of things say, that their patriotism is by no means limited to outward show, but that garters and still more unspeakable articles, are adorned with the irresistible red, white and green. Then there are all sorts of races: *Dei Sedioli*, chariot races, steeple-

chases in his honor, and in the evening the race course, *il Prato della Valle*, is illuminated with electrical lights. Such times, in short, never were seen in Padua before, and our simple, soldierly king, who hates show and noise and the hurrahs of popularity more than any man living, has to put a good face upon the matter, and bear as best he can, the fuss they make about him. After all 'tis not paying very dear for his fine new whistle.

FLORENCE, August 30, 1866.

Apropos to music, I went Saturday to the last representation of "Don Giovanni" at the Pagliano, and came away more than ever convinced that to the real lover of music words are an abomination. It is like tying leaden weights to a skylark's wings and bidding it soar to the heavens. The opera, as I have said elsewhere, was well enough, and the *rôles* throughout respectably sustained; but thus to pretend to interpret Mozart's genius

is simply a profanation. Music is the speech of the gods, and with them only can we hold converse in it. Consequently to me an escape from words is indispensable to my enjoyment of it. An escape luckily easily accomplished, thanks to harmonious necessities, that make of every Italian opera only a succession of musical vowels, whose connection with the vitalizing consonants is too slight to trammel the imagination. So I shut my eyes and was soon soaring far above Don Giovanni, Donna Anna, Zerlina and the rest, when an importunate friend at my side, suddenly arrested my flight and brought me down to earth again. Poor fellow, he was dreadfully tired of the "*Grande musique*," as it is called, and a little before had availed himself of that freedom, which we women shall have one day, when Mr. John Stuart Mill shall have his way, to take his hat and stroll into the street and into Santa Croce, where he had found amusement far more to his taste than the—well, he didn't call it *Grande musique*; he whispered, too, in my

ear, just as Don Giovanni was making his exit in the flaming, fiery vortex, that he had bought such a beauty of a *cocomero* (watermelon), which he hoped I would allow him to eat and drink with us when we reached home. I nodded assent, and the announcement came just in time to reconcile two enthusiastic young girls who were with me, to the end of the performance—that they were regretting had an end—and which they said they would gladly sit up all night to see over again! Ah seventeen! sweet seventeen!

Speaking of watermelons, that refreshing fruit or vegetable is just now in its perfection here, and our streets are literally gay, as with a tapestry, with their rich, red hemispheres, exposed in the evening on temporary stands, each of which, with its lights and its eager, good-natured crowd clustered about it, is as pleasant a spectacle as one would wish to see, and one I always long to make part of. The *cocomero* at such times is the sherbet, the ice-cream of the poorer classes, but in the morning a slice of it, with a bit of bread, is

often the only breakfast of many a sturdy laborer, who works none the less vigorously for his light repast. But the poor people are not the only ones who eat cocomeros; a dandy "*pur sang*" is occasionally seen at one of these improvised counters, and a lovely lady was once known to descend from her carriage and ate one or two slices, taking them in her own lily fingers, and standing at the table with the others, just as if she had been nothing grander or better than the poorest little "*modista*" (milliner) who looked on in amazement at the condescension. But to return to ourselves, and how we eat *our cocomero*; and *en passant*, I will just observe that *cocomero*, no matter how eaten, should only be partaken of with intimate friends, who are at the same time *gens d'esprit*, snobs and fools always and everywhere to be excluded from the feast; and the persons of our party fulfilling perfectly the indispensable conditions, we set to work to enjoy ourselves. The melon was perfection, exceeding expectation even, and though eaten as it always must be under

difficulties—only a pig can unconcernedly overcome swinish example—it did not deter us from a thorough, and consequently primitive enjoyment of it. We cut the melon in halves, and having decided to free ourselves from the proprieties of knives and forks (we did have napkins), and each being provided with a great circular morsel, instead of the more equitable conical slice—the fashion here, we betook ourselves to a balcony overlooking a garden, and there, leaning over the parapet, reckless of the dripping juice, our mouths literally overflowing with enjoyment, we ate to the last mouthful our watermelon, and so should watermelons be eaten !

One thing leading to another, *cocomero* leads me to cholera, which some say we shall have here in spite of the advanced season. It has been for some time at Genoa, and I learn from the papers that its ordinary dangers are greatly increased by the opposition of the populace to the measures taken by the municipality for the public safety. They resist and resent every effort to purify and ventilate

their houses, and the most natural and simple precautions are neglected. As for the physicians, provided for them at the public expense, they look upon them with horror, and it is dangerous for them even to walk the streets. About a week since Dr. C——, on his way to visit a patient, excited a veritable tumult. "Give it to him! give it to him," was cried out from the infuriated crowd. "He is one of the doctors paid by the municipality to poison the poor people," and had not the carabineers interfered for his protection, he would have been torn in pieces. Poor, misguided creatures, they have had so much to suffer from those above them, that they fancy all their ills must proceed from the same source. I remember a similar state of things during the cholera season of 1854. I was at Via Reggio when it broke out there. The fashionable season was at its height when it made its appearance, and in a twinkling, as it were, the place was depopulated. All who had the means left the place at once, the visitors, most of them Italians from Lucca,

making the greatest haste. A carriage, a cart, a baroccino (wagon), could not be got for love or money in two days time after the fatal fact was known, and the poor people streamed off to the mountains with their beds upon their backs. I determined not to leave, I hadn't a particle of fear, my children's vacation had yet a month to run, and they entreated me not to take them back to Florence; so in spite of the remonstrances of friends, I persisted in my resolution. Physicians were sent to Via Reggia from Florence to attend upon the inhabitants gratis, but, as in Genoa now, they would have nothing to do with them, and though one of them, poor fellow, soon himself fell a victim to the disease, they persisted in their inveterate distrust. They seriously believed that the Grand Duke had sent them there to poison the people. My children and myself continued in the meantime our usual way of living, taking our daily baths, and only varying our régime by eating rather more fruit than usual; we lived upon peaches that cholera summer, they were

abundant and naturally very cheap, as no one but ourselves in the place touched them. At first, I think we were rather popular with the villagers, they liked our courage in staying, and were amused at our audacity in eating the forbidden fruit. Suddenly, however, all this changed, the women began to turn their backs upon us when we met them, and the men, as they went by us, scowled and muttered "*Streghe! streghe!*" ("witches! witches.") "They are the ones that do us the mischief, *meglio che sene vadano*," ("you'd better take yourselves off") which we very speedily did, especially as the police advised us to do so, saying they had not force enough to protect us in case of a popular tumult. The people had got it into their heads, that persons who ate so many peaches unharmed, in the midst of the cholera, must be in some way uncanny.

Florence is getting grander and finer and more beautiful every day. We have got the most exquisite bronze lamps in the *Piazza della Signoria* that ever were seen, worthy of Benvenuto himself, and the new post-office

which is to be opened on the first of September, is about to forsake its old time-honored Pisan roof for a still more distinguished locality under the galleries of the Uffizi. There is no end to the money that has been spent upon it, and as in this part of the world taste is the usual auxiliary of gold, the new post-office will by no means misbecome its illustrious neighborhood. I've no time to describe it here, only it is as gorgeously magnificent as marble, gilding and glass can make it. Such a post-office should only be the medium of the most delightful communications, it is too charming for almost anything but a love-letter, and if I were the king, I would make a law forthwith, prohibiting duns and bores and disagreeables of all sorts from sending their missives through it. A new group of statuary the *Ratto di Polissena* by Fedi is soon to be put up in the *Loggia di Orgagna*; in short the old piazza seems preparing to welcome fittingly her newly domesticated guest "Liberty," which it is to be hoped will soon feel herself at home there.

The *Niccolini* opens Saturday evening with a French company under the direction of Monsieur Eugène Meynadier. Monsieur Meynadier has engaged a pupil of the Conservatory of Paris for the principal *rôle*, Mademoiselle Estelle Juillet, who got the great prize for tragedy last year. The theatrical world are all on the alert to see this new star. The other artists are already well and favorably known here. The other theatres are also beginning to open their doors to the public, and *nous autres* will soon be here to give a zest to pleasures that otherwise would be ennui.

FLORENCE, September 15, 1866.

Florence is waking up from her midsummer doze and preparing to welcome back her runaways, and as the weather is unusually cool everywhere this season, it is probable that lake, land, and seashore, mountain fastness and valley will earlier than usual yield up their pilgrims. Florence is going to be

“ awfully ” gay this coming winter, and I, for one, am sorry for it. I like Florence as she *was*, with a fashion and gaiety of her own, smacking of her mediæval dignity and traditions, and think she loses immensely by putting on the airs of a modern capital. Improvement and progress do not harmonize with Florence, and would do well to go elsewhere with their benefits. Conservatism is in the very air we breathe here—the stones of her palaces preach it, her churches command it, her people instinctively cling to it, and so majestic and imposing is her aspect even now, that the genius of go-aheadism incarnate would be awed into letting alone, and would never dare propose a railway through her streets ! Nevertheless, and alas ! worse things than even those are, I fear, in store for her, for are not her monks unfrocked, her peasants unclothed, her patricians elsewhere than at the feet of beauty, and worse than all, is not the schoolmaster, on the wings of the wind, abroad ? and can fortress or town, palace or church stay him ? All, however, is not

yet lost, and many signs indicate that the good old times, if past and gone, are susceptible of revival, none more so than the attitude of the Genoese people at this moment in face of the cholera. That pestilence still continues its ravages at Genoa, and every day accounts reach us of alarming excesses committed by the superstitious populace, whose ferocity seems to increase with every new outbreak of the disease. Every one who has the slightest connection with the municipality is the object of special distrust. A few days since a messenger of that body was returning home, carrying a loaf of bread done up in paper to his family. His package excited suspicion—it probably contained poison—and he was soon surrounded by a furious crowd, vociferating at the top of their voices, “Down with him! down with him! he has poison! kill him! kill him!” Luckily for him he had only to open his bundle and show the contents, to dispel their suspicions; the bread fell into the street and their fury was appeased. Another time, a woman having occasion to go

to the *Maison de Ville* overheard the Syndic and a physician discussing different methods of employing chloride of lime, and supposing of course that they were concerting their plans for the destruction of the "*povera gente*" she rushed into the street and imparted her discoveries and conjectures to the people. An assemblage soon gathered about her, and in less than no time assumed the character of a formidable disturbance, accompanied by fearful threats and imprecations against the pretended manipulators of the poison. The Syndic tried in vain to reason with them, and finding the tumult increase and threatening to become dangerous, sent for the carabineers who arrested the woman and finally put an end to the agitation. A day rarely passes without similar scenes in that devoted city, and the cases of cholera do not diminish. The nurses in the hospitals are accused of administering the "*acquetta*," Catherine de' Medici's favorite poison, to the patients, which accommodating physicians and apothecaries prepare for them. Even the washer-

women, employed in disinfecting the clothes of choleric patients, and the grave diggers who bury them, are obliged to be protected in the performance of their duties by the military. As I said before, the poor unfortunate members of the municipality are looked upon, however, as the original conspirators against the life and health of the people. They are called "*Untori*," and are supposed to be at the bottom of all the mischief and to know precisely the day and hour when the pestilence will break out. Those who have read Manzoni's "*Promessi Sposi*" cannot fail to recall descriptions of similar scenes during the plague of 1630 at Milan, and that then, as now, the epithet "*Untori*," that is, literally, "greasers," was applied with equal justice and propriety. It was the common belief, at that time of insane and horrible fear, that enemies of the people, that is all who were not themselves people, went about the city with vases of unctuous poison, composed of wasps, toads, serpents' saliva, and half a dozen other ingredients more absurd and dis-

gusting still, with which they greased the walls of the city, the portals of the churches, the doors and knockers of houses, every place in short with which the public was most likely to come in contact, in the amiable and philanthropic intention of destroying as many of their fellow creatures as possible. And whoever dared to hint a doubt of the reality of these atrocious intentions, was looked upon as an accomplice of the conspirators and had to take the consequences. You perceive that the good old times have a very strong family resemblance with the good new ones, and that the schoolmaster is not going to have a very lazy time of it after all.

I think I mentioned in a former letter an extraordinary outbreak of the cholera in a conventual establishment for the education of young girls at *Torre Annunziata*, that carried off twenty-eight or twenty-nine of their number in about forty-eight hours, and was simultaneous with the reappearance of the disease in the city of Naples. The suddenness and number of the deaths excited a great deal of

comment and conjecture at the time, and why the matter was not properly looked into then, no one knows. It was not, however. But a recent development of the malady has at last induced the authorities to order an examination of the premises, the result of which has proved that the *buon Padre Ludovico* was in the habit of burying all persons who died in the establishment, in the grounds belonging to the building, often, indeed, without taking the trouble of announcing their decease at the office of the *Stato Civile*. Six bodies had quite recently been interred, and their graves were found close to a cistern, the water of which was *said* to be only used for washing. Two coffins were also discovered in the convent itself, containing two skeletons, destined to be sent to Rome for beatification—so the *padre* asserted—and the story of these two blessed, or rather to be blessed skeletons, forms an odd episode to all this tissue of absurdities and horrors. It seems that last year *Padre Ludovico* was commissioned by the authorities at Rome to seek

for the body of a monk, who died about a century since, in the odor of sanctity, and was buried in the church of *Santa Maria degli Angioli*. The holy father, as you may suppose, lost no time in undertaking the flattering commission. To hunt up even a saint's bones was no mean honor, and only sanctified flesh and blood could be allowed the privilege. Consequently, imagine his joy, his exultation, when, instead of one saint's body he found three! Yes, actually three! By what signs he distinguished them I do not know, but probably from the "odor of sanctity" being a material fact, and not, as is generally supposed, a figure of speech—in which case, of course, there could be no difficulty, especially as a *padre's* nose is proverbially a pretty long one. However that may be, there they were—three saints, ready for canonization, one of whom was instantly forwarded to Rome, while the other two bided their time in the Convent of the *Stimmattine*—where, alas, they have just been exposed to the profane gaze and comments of the vulgar. Heartbreaking as

it is to relate, *Padre Ludovico*, the pious discoverer of dead saints' bones—the intelligent, generous and prudent head of an educational establishment for young ladies, has been arrested; and contrary to what would have probably happened in the good old times, will be severely fined, if not otherwise punished, for his culpable neglect of the common precautions of hygienic laws. I forgot to add that in his defence *Padre Ludovico* said that he was authorized by the former government to bury his dead within the convent walls. Another proof, if one were needed, of the vast superiority of old times over new!

The most exciting topic of the moment is a "Ladies' Fair" to be opened Sunday in aid of the fund for the wounded of the war. Prince Strozzi has offered his magnificent palace for the occasion, and the Princess Strozzi, to whom is confided the direction of the affair, is almost buried in the beautiful things, sent for sale, and has lived for the last month in the bosom of female committees. To-morrow the finishing touches are to be given to the

arrangements, and the day after, at twelve o'clock, the halls of the palace are to be opened gratis to the public. I think a mistake has been made in not exacting an entrance fee, as delicacy will not restrain the non-buying public from entering, nor could a franc paid for their admission, have excluded them.

The French Theatre at the Niccolini is playing, I hear, to poor houses, partly, of course, from the absence of the Court and "*nous autres*," but principally because the public are tired of the Meynadier company, that has now been playing there for four consecutive years. The new actress too, Mdlle. Estelle Juliet, has rather disappointed expectations. Her talents seem rather undeveloped and she isn't beautiful enough to make a *furore* whether or no. In short, for one reason or another, the "*Lion Amoureux*" hasn't gone down with a Florentine public. Nobody cares here for the social questions of the day, for anything in short but forbidden love-making and political clap-trap on the stage, so the crowd gladly forsake the *Niccolini* for the

Pagliano and the *Rossini*, formerly the *Sollecite*. This latter, especially, offers attractions, with which even the larger theatres just now can hardly compete; for, hasn't it, besides that charming opera *La Cenerentola*, a showy, flourishing ballet, with *ballerine* with the shortest of short petticoats, with costumes and decorations, mirrors, galleries, colonnades in the most bewildering confusion and impossible perspective? And all that for a franc; not to say that what with the opera and the ballet you make almost a night of it, and have the satisfaction of feeling that you have got more than your money's worth, and overreached the *impresario*, a satisfaction as keenly enjoyed by an Italian, as by any thrifty native of Connecticut itself.

I regret that I have not time to give you an account of an interesting meeting of the *Della Crusca* Academy that took place last Saturday in their new hall on the ground floor of the palace of the *Belle Arti*. The *Accademia della Crusca* was founded under Francesco de' Medici in 1582—revised again on its original

plan in 1814 by Napoleon 1st. All the world of course has read of this famous academy, instituted for the purpose of preserving the purity of the Italian language, to which end it has been engaged all these long years upon a dictionary, that twenty years hence will hardly be completed. The word *crusca* means bran, and the society's emblem is a sieve with this device, "*Il più bel fiore ne coglie*" (It gathers the finest flour—the finest flour is here called *fior di farina*) in allusion to its functions with regard to the Italian tongue. The decisions of the Academy admit of no appeal; its authority is supreme and unquestioned. The members are composed of the first literary and scientific men in the kingdom—the *sine qua non* of whose election is a fixed residence at Florence. Would to Heaven that we in America had a similar institution! Our national tendency to slang, that in one way or another, out of the mouths of the vulgar, forces itself up through the newspapers, even into our popular literature, making a dyke of the sort, an almost imperious necessity.

FLORENCE, September 25, 1866.

The visiting season has fairly commenced and cards are being distributed far and near with unusual activity. Friends from summer resorts are dropping in with faces and figures joyously rosy and plump, with a capital of health and strength, sufficient even for a Florentine winter campaign—Carnival and Lent included—and it is with a sort of self-pity, mingled with remorse, that those whom circumstances have confined within the city walls, look back upon their lost, misused summer. The “*sommités*” of the great world are bestirring themselves, and have already begun to sift and examine their various social materials, and to be or not to be admitted to certain houses and reunions, is a question of tantalizing solicitude to many a fair aspirant of fashion. * * * * *

I have been glad to learn that the fair at the Strozzi palace, although not a complete success, resulted in giving a sum of over five thousand francs to the fund for the destitute

and wounded soldiers, only about one-half that the lady patronesses expected to raise. The fact is, the organization of such enterprises is not well understood here, and independent of their novelty, two or three other reasons combined to render this bazaar less brilliantly fortunate than was hoped. In the first place the public was a little indignant, a little resentful, that the Princess Antonia Strozzi, whom a "sublime benevolence," so one of the morning papers here termed it, had inspired to offer the use of her palace on this occasion, had not been more generously inspired to proffer one of her many magnificent and vast saloons, instead of a comparatively bare and unfurnished ante-chamber, as the theatre of her charity. Then again, this same carping public was dissatisfied with the toilettes of the ladies presiding at the tables, which really were far from elegant. Some said, too, that the ladies themselves were not half so handsome as they should have been, that beauty, not rank, was the *sine qua non* on these occasions, while others, and these mostly

foreigners, Americans and English, complained bitterly of the absence of that indispensable element of success in our fairs, young and pretty girls, and this last complaint was the most unreasonable of all, as everybody knows that young girls, whether pretty or ugly, are not a Florentine institution.

In the meantime, while fair ladies are presiding at bazaars and fine ladies are settling social preliminaries, all the world, fair and fine ladies included, are rushing to the different theatres now opened, and nightly filled to overflowing, and the *artistes* of the aristocratic Pergola, being still engaged in rehearsing *L'Africaine*, which is to be put upon the stage next month, it is permissible to amuse one's self at the smaller and less fashionable places of public amusement. Among them all, none perhaps offers just at this moment, greater attractions than the little Rossini theatre in the Borgognisanti. I think I told you in one of my former letters, that this miniature theatre, which has just been re-

painted, regilt, reornamented, transformed in short into a veritable *bijou*, has recently, with the permission of the great *maestro*, changed its name from the *Sollecite* to that of *Rossini*, and is devoted exclusively to the performance of the operas of its immortal namesake. Last Thursday the *impresario*, who has had the good taste in these times of forced loans and domestic disturbances, to give to the public a music, joyous and enlivening enough to make one forget the annoyances of the day, commenced his season with a spectacle composed of *La Cenerentola* and *Il Diavolo Zoppo* (the Lame Devil.) Heavens! what delicious music it is—that of the *Cenerentola*, what variety! what charm! what grace! but to hear it you must bring your ears to Italy, for no where else will the self-same performers before the self-same audiences produce the same effect, and less than anywhere else in America. It is all nonsense for us Americans to pretend that we like Italian music in New York, Boston and Philadelphia. We do not. We endure it in those places as we do other enjoy-

ments that fashionable tyranny imposes upon us, but here and in Milan and Naples even, we take pleasure in it, and the reason is that our souls are "*en rapport*" with the country and the people. We are Italianized for the moment, and, forgetting to be Americans, can relish something that is not the mart, the exchange, and the tribune. But to return to the enchanting music of the *Cenerentola*, which I have rarely heard more charmingly performed than on that evening, owing greatly to the perfect *ensemble* of the piece. All the *rôles*, the most insignificant even, those that are usually given to poor devils termed *comprimarie* here, were performed by veritable artists, and the pretensions of vanity and self-love for once did not interfere to spoil the general effect. Madame Ferardi, the very handsome prima-donna, was wonderfully chaste and sympathetic in her rendering of the *Cenerentola*, and with true artistic tact neither added nor took away anything from her *rôle*. Her success with the intelligent audience was perfect, and her final *rondo* was

twice encored. Nor was the success of the young tenor, Piazza, who made his *début* only last winter, I think, less brilliant. His method is that of the pure, old Italian school, which has produced Frascini and Boccolini, and connoisseurs are already predicting of this young *tenorino*, that he will succeed, ere long, Gardoni and Giuglini at the theatres of London, Paris and St. Petersburg. I wish to Heaven some American *impresario* would get the start of them all and, for once, secure a talent in its dawn and freshness, to opera-lovers at home; but that I suppose can never be. We would not dare to be the first to admire and encourage, for what if Europe should refuse to follow our lead? Better its worn-out, used-up leavings than such a catastrophe! Better those waning stars, Grisi and Ristori, than morning brightness, whose sun may be arrested ere it reach its noon-tide glory, by potent Joshuas on this side of the water. Oh, yes, by all means, let us continue to be humble, especially as it is a virtue we Americans are not often called upon to prac-

tice. But to return to charming, neglected *Cenerentola*. Giacomelli (Don Magnifico), a great favorite with the Florentine public, in the cavatina "*Miei rampolli femmini*," sang in a style of the purest comic, without descending to those vulgar buffooneries that make no one, not even "the *gamins*" laugh now-a-days, was applauded to the skies, and in the duet "*un segreto d' importanza*" he was superb. In short nothing could have gone off better than the whole opera, and when one reflects that with it all there was a ballet, such as it was, I must confess, but still a ballet, and that the entrance to the theatre was only a franc, one will probably exclaim, as I did returning home, how in Heaven's name can it be done for the money, and yet it is, and profitably too.

Apropos to music, her sister art sculpture, is just now offering to her admirers, an occasion for going into ecstasies, if they like. A bronze copy of the famous David of Michael-Angelo by Professor Papi, is being exhibited in the royal foundry in *Via Cavour*, and yes-

terday with a friend I went to visit it—though to tell the truth and shame—my family, my country, my friends, the traveling public generally, and the newest, freshest arrivals especially, I can't, I never could endure the original, a great stuck-up figure in a braggadocio attitude, reminding one of heroes of the ring, that nothing but the genius of Michael-Angelo could keep upon his legs, but of course, that would sustain even a worse man upright! But all that has nothing to do with the copy, whose merit is incontestible. At least I don't contest it. It is cast in that inimitable Florentine bronze, of which Florence is so justly proud, of a smooth, even tint, except in the hair, where, whether accidentally or not, the reliefs are of a sort of reddish tint, which improve extremely the general effect. The copy is rigorously exact, even to a reproduction of the defects of the original, for which Mr. Papi has been greatly applauded, though a meaner model would probably have undergone improvements. Such as it is, it is far more

agreeable to the eye than the original, owing to its subdued and harmonious coloring, and it will soon take the place in the *Piazza della Signoria*, hitherto occupied by the celebrated original, which illustrious bit of stone-work is, if I am not mistaken, to be removed to the halls of the Academy of the *Belle Arti*, safe from the caprice and severity of the elements. The story of the statue is as follows: Towards the end of the 15th century the Florentine Republic, desirous of possessing a fine statue of David for one of the piazzas—that of the Duomo, I believe—procured an immense block of Carrara marble for the purpose and offered the job to the competition of the most celebrated sculptors of the day. Many of them of course were anxious to obtain such an opportunity of distinguishing themselves, among others, Leonardo da Vinci, to whom the *gonfaloniere*, Pier Soderini, was anxious to give it. But the friends of Michael-Angelo, then at Rome, successfully exerted their influence and obtained the preference, and wrote to him that the block, the object of

so much ambition, was at his disposition. He returned at once to Florence and began the work the 13th of September 1501, which was completed three years after, in 1504. He labored, it is said, with passion and in solitude, and the result was the statue that all the world raves about, and which puts me in mind of a prize-fighter.

Yesterday morning Garibaldi arrived in the city. I was aroused from sleep by the noise of joyous *evvivas*, and, on asking the cause, was told that Garibaldi was come and was then, at that very moment, passing our door on his way out of the Porta Romana to Madonna Mario's (Jessie White's). I rushed to the window, but he was no longer in sight, only the joyous, shouting crowd, and I almost cried with vexation to think that I could have slept while a hero was passing, and that hero Garibaldi. I will see him yet, though, if I sit up all night for it another time. In the meantime I feel that Florence and every one in it is ennobled by his presence.

FLORENCE, October 5, 1866.

I've seen Garibaldi!! Seen him! I've pressed his stainless hand and looked into his heroic eyes—heroic, but tender and gentle as a woman's. It was an unexpected pleasure at last, for though I had said that chains and bolts and bars should not keep me from seeing Garibaldi, if ever he came within a hundred miles of my neighborhood, yet now, when he was within ten minutes' walk of my very house, I hesitated about paying him a visit. It is all very well saying what you would do, such and such a case occurring. I've known people, whom the devil himself, tail, horns, hoofs and all, were not going to frighten, retreat pretty rapidly before a pugnacious cat, and after all Garibaldi is Garibaldi, and stronger-minded women than I, have hesitated before paying him a visit. I knew too, that he abhorred being made a show of, and was well aware that half the people who wished to see him, would rush just as eagerly to look upon Ching-Chung, or the woman with a

beard, and how was he to know, that I belonged to the other, the better half? how, indeed! Better stay away than be confounded with the sight-seers, and so I resolved that I would stay away, and should have stuck to my resolution, had not a friend, whose official position made it a duty to call, and insured his reception, invited me to accompany him. He didn't have to invite twice you may be sure; I flew to my room to get ready; with what a beating heart I put on my bonnet, how hard I tried to look my prettiest, in which, by the way, I didn't succeed. It is only to very young women that emotion is becoming. To us "well preserved" ones it is utter undoing. How happens it, by the way, that these "well preserved" women are always preserved so late? Why not put them sooner into pickle? But I must not digress, to settle even the most important questions, especially while on my way to see Garibaldi. Crispis Villa, where he was staying (he went first to Mario's) is just outside of the Porta Romana, not ten minutes walk from our house in the Via dei

Serragli, so we soon found ourselves there and though one of the two red-shirted sentinels, ignoring my friend's official character, said he thought we should not be received, M—'s card procured us instant admission, and we were so fortunate as to find him alone. Or rather almost so, for though two gentlemen were standing at the window of the drawing-room into which we were shown, I only learnt after we left, that one of them was Ricciotti Garibaldi, and on the whole I was not sorry that I had not known it sooner. As it was, I had only just enough eyes for *the* Garibaldi! Not yours, dear public, nor mine, nor anybody's Garibaldi, but a being as unlike and superior to them all as Heaven is to Earth. In a twinkling, the hero of my imagination had disappeared forever before the grander reality, and with my whole heart I paid willing homage to the man, whom hitherto I had worshipped as a demi-god. Need I say that his mortal aspect was by far the noblest? Externally, however, he was the Garibaldi of the photographs and the print-shops. He

wore the historical red shirt, and the almost equally historical red cap, and I was very glad of it, for mortal or demi-god, 'tis the costume that becomes him best, and even Garibaldi in my eyes—remember I am but a woman—would lose a portion of his prestige in any other. Fancy him, if you can, in a dress-coat and choker. He rose as we entered and saluted us with a simple friendly courtesy, that put me at once at my ease, or rather would have done so if anything in manner could, but my heart was beating ready to break, and I just didn't burst into tears. I was seeing Garibaldi! I did not, though, make a fool of myself, I am happy to say. Cold-hearted, or rather no-hearted Mrs. Blank herself could not have behaved with more propriety, and here perhaps it will not be malapropos to say something of Garibaldi's manners, which are just simply perfection, too perfect for description even, but as I hold that manners are the man, I will try to give some faint idea of them, especially as Garibaldi, the hero, the patriot, the soldier, is better known

to the world than Garibaldi the gentleman—the gentleman of an entirely new school, though it was founded nearly two thousand years ago! No airs about Garibaldi, no assumption, above all, no condescension! nothing to make you lose an inch of your stature, or stand less upright than usual in his presence, and yet never in any other presence have I been so impressed with the vast distance that separates man from his fellow-man. His own unconsciousness of the distance makes humility anything but humiliating. One uplooks willingly to him who never yet looked down upon living mortal. Our visit lasted about ten minutes. Delicacy and *savoir-vivre* forbade a longer intrusion, and of course there was little opportunity for conversation. I did not even ascertain what Garibaldi thought of some of my favorite crotchets, though I had gone prepared with one or two searching questions. I am sorry to say that I am still in the dark as to his opinion of female doctors, orators, and notaries public, and do not even know whether he thinks

“bloomers” becoming. I managed, however, to tell him how glad everybody would be in America to see him, and how much we had all regretted that he had not taken part in our glorious struggle and illustrated our victory with his name. “You did not need my services,” he replied with a smile, “moreover my heart was always with you, I looked upon your cause, as not so much the cause of America as that of the universe entire; it was the battle of freedom the world over.” A few more words were then said, the usual compliments of leave-taking exchanged, and my friend and myself left, and I saw him no more, but the glow that his words and presence illumined in my heart, warms and brightens it still.

Garibaldi left in the twelve o'clock train Saturday for Leghorn, on his way to his Isle of Caprera, where he must so long to find himself, though even there he cannot escape his popularity; 'tis a spectre that haunts even his fireside, and will only cease to be importunate when it keeps its vigil beside his grave. Never was anything seen like the

wild passion of enthusiasm and grief that accompanied his departure. Dear Garibaldi! it is love even more than admiration that he inspires! and sobs burst even from manly hearts as the train bore him away. He made no speech, but silently bowed his *addio*, while "*Viva Garibaldi!*" "*Viva Garibaldi!*" rang through the air in a shout that pierced the skies.

For the last three or four days the streets leading from the *Via dei Serragli* to the "*Piazza della Signoria*" have been encumbered with an enormous truck, sliding upon iron rails, that are taken up and put down as fast as it passes over them, employed in transporting the marble group of the *Ratto di Polissena*—"The rape of Polyxana," by the Chevalier Pio Fedi, which is to take its place, beside many another illustrious marble, in the *Loggia di Orgagna*. It is a colossal affair and it is the fashion to admire it. I doubt, though, if the crowds that flocked to see and admire the other "*ratto*" that has so long graced the same locality, would confirm the

general tribute. But whether they would or not, the time has gone by for the commemoration of a fable, that Homer's genius preserves quite sufficiently from oblivion, and since there is no dearth of subjects of a higher character and purer interest, "*en rapport*" too, with the manners and sentiments of the age, the artist has no excuse to justify his paganism. Enough of the Rape of the Sabines for the Loggia, and that is only tolerable on the ground that it had the plea of necessity and the scope of utility. The Romans needed wives, and as commercial science was in its infancy, and philanthropy not even in its bud, neither public nor private enterprise had contracted by ship-loads to supply the market, and they had just to get them as they could; but from a half-consenting captive to the struggling victim of a ruffian, who has just slain her brother, and resists a mother's agony, there is a world of difference that it needs no Columbus to discover.

Professor Fedi has certainly erred in his subject, and as his error is colossal, it will

force itself on public attention and help to correct a very general mistake.

The treaty of peace is finally signed, the French have left Rome, the Empress Charlotte is visiting the Pope, Venice is preparing to receive her King, and our good clergyman Mr. Van Nest has returned to Florence.

FLORENCE, October 8, 1866.

Florence is in a state of collapse since Garibaldi left it. A cold hearthstone, a squeezed lemon, a theatre by daylight, a wedding breakfast, the bride departed, are faint images of its dreary flatness and desolation. Heroes alas! are fatal to the common-places of life, above all to its common-place people, the moral of which is, that all men should be heroes, and my belief is that so they might be if they liked, for to that effect it is not necessary to storm citadels or to conquer kingdoms. Every man has his Sicily to subdue and hero-worshippers, as we women all

are, need not erect altars to strange gods, if our domestic divinities would deign to be aught but hewers of wood and drawers of water. As it is, while men are what they are, the incense, that should with steady, constant flame, burn during a life-time, blazes upward now and then in one all-consuming, passionate flash, to leave the temple dark and desolate, until another demi-god descends to rekindle the fire. And it serves you right, too, ye lords of creation. Be Garibaldis yourselves if you would prefer it otherwise. In the meantime we who adore that hero, "*sans peur et sans reproche*," will bless our stars that such beings do appear now and then to dissipate our growing misanthropy and revive our failing devotion.

A report reached Florence a few days since, that, at first doubted or disbelieved, has since unfortunately been confirmed. The Empress Charlotte of Mexico is mad, and the Pope is said to be the cause of it. A letter in this morning's *Italie* says, she reached Rome in perfect health, but that the day following her

arrival, having gone to the Vatican to pay His Holiness a visit, she left his presence in great agitation and dissolved in tears. The Pope returned her visit the next day and left her weeping, and it was afterwards known that he had blamed with great severity, certain acts of her husband relative to the church property in Mexico. Hoping to soften his rigor, the unfortunate Empress returned again soon after to the Vatican, but far from obtaining comfort or consolation, the harshness of Pio Nono seemed to redouble. He reproached her with Maximilian's irreligious conduct, which her influence, he said, ought to have prevented, threatened them both with divine vengeance, and finally had the rudeness to turn his back upon her, a woman and an Empress, and leave her alone in the hall of reception. The effect was terrible. The Empress, a woman of intense sensibility and ardent piety, appalled by the wrath and menaces of His Holiness, left the Vatican completely out of her head, and had hardly reached her hotel, when she insisted upon

returning, and once there, no persuasions could induce her to leave during the whole night. The papal court, as you may well imagine, is in a state of the greatest excitement, and the Pope's friends have already spread the report that she has been poisoned. But no one is deceived for an instant as to the cause of her misfortune, and the Pope's personal popularity will suffer greatly in consequence. People are surprised, too, as those who differed the most from the Pope in politics and religion, always gave him the credit of being a perfect gentleman and particularly courteous and well-bred. For my part, I begin to think that he himself must be mad. Nor would it be wonderful if he were.

The weather is getting decidedly cool—cold even. The "*al fresco*" theatres are shutting up and a woolen shawl over one's shoulders is a comfortable thing. The flowers, however, continue to bloom in the most, I should say unblushing way, were I speaking of anything but roses and pinks, in spite of the temperature, but that they always do here. Nothing

can be more hardy and robust than Italian blossoms, and "fragile as a flower" would never have become a common and favorite figure of speech, had they only bloomed in these enchanted regions. Last Friday was the *Festa di Fiesole*, in honor of San Francesco, and I joined the gay throng that took their way to this picturesque village, the cradle of Florence. We dined in the open air upon chickens, cooked before our eyes by the dozen, on four or five spits ranged one over the other, drank the wine of the country, growing literally before our eyes on the neighboring hills, of that sparkling, pungent flavor that the Italians call "*frizzantino*" (whip stroke), visited the Capuchin Convent situated upon the very spot, formerly occupied by the ancient Acropolis, looked with astonishment upon Etruscan remains of the old walls that once surrounded the city, bought the little straw trumpets with which children, who have fond papas, madden you all the time you stay, and returned home quietly along the road by the Arno, entered the Porta San Gallo, satisfied

with a day pleasantly if not usefully spent, yet, on the whole, glad that a year must elapse ere I could enjoy a similar satisfaction.

I hear that now that the peace is signed, the legations of France to Florence and of Florence to Paris are simultaneously to be elevated to the rank of embassies, and that the future Italian and Austrian legations will receive the same designations, in which case, unless we follow suit, Mr. Marsh's superiority of time will have to yield *le pas* to that of official rank. Mr. Marsh has hitherto been the senior of the diplomatic body, and of course takes precedence of all the other ministers.

The last moments of Austrian dominion at Venice have finally arrived. Every sign of its past empire is fast disappearing, and this sepulchre of a few months ago, is now filled with the living, raised from the dead, at the trumpet voice of liberty. At length Italy is free, from the Alps to the Adriatic. The tri-color waves before the church of San Marco, and ere long will float above the Capitol.

FLORENCE, October 23, 1866.

All Florence has been in a state of the most extravagant excitement for the last week about Meyerbeer's opera "*Africana*," which came off on Saturday evening. The talk of cafés, boudoirs, and tea-tables has been of nothing else, and "Are you going Saturday to the Pergola?" was the vital question—the one that for the moment took precedence of every other. Every other amusement was voted an impertinence and a bore. Balls became routs, concerts were disconcerted, tea-tables upset, and society in general was completely unhinged. Many a long-indulged and well-arranged scheme of pleasure was nipped in the bud by this full-blown colossal enjoyment, and among its many victims my own little tea-party, to my thinking, was not the least important. It is true, that I might by taking thought, have avoided the catastrophe, but who can be always taking thought? and having, in spite of the great coming event, which for more than a month had cast not

only its shadow, but its echoes before, heedlessly invited a few friends, twenty in all, to a sociable tea-drinking, eight only surrounded the alas! no longer festal board. My tea-table had come into collision with the vessel of the "*Africana*" and gone hopelessly down, and of its eight survivors, six were ladies and the others, two superannuated beaux, one as deaf as fate, and the other, as I discovered afterwards, an unsuccessful applicant for a stall at the Pergola. I bore my disappointment as well as I could, but it was no great consolation to me, to learn the next day, that all the world had been in raptures, surpassing all former musical raptures, and that never, perhaps, had expectation and enthusiasm been more fully satisfied. The representation had been a perfect unqualified success, and well had the *impresario*, Signor Monare-Rocca, deserved it, for independent of the incontestible merit of the work, no pains, no expense, no intelligence had been spared by him in its interpretation, and I am told that even in Paris, it was not represented with greater magnifi-

cence. The orchestra was numerous and admirably drilled; the costumes made at Paris at a fabulous expense, after designs approved by Meyerbeer himself; and the vessel, constructed at a cost of 20,000 francs by a Venetian artist of great merit, though encountering difficulties, owing to the small size of the stage, and the almost impossibility of producing nautical illusion, surpassed public expectation. The public expectation of artists, not sailors, luckily. In short, the success of the piece was as great as even an *impresario* could wish, and Signor Monare-Rocca's wishes must have been more than usually ardent on this occasion, owing to the enormous outlay of money upon its getting up, and still more to the fact that all the second row of boxes, the "*Ordine Nobile*," as it is called, belongs to private individuals, most of them Florentine nobles, who pay only the entrance fee, and is consequently wholly lost to the manager. This loss on Saturday evening was attempted to be compensated by raising the price of admission from three francs to five, and set-

ting apart a number of seats in the pit, for which ten francs were demanded, besides augmenting the price of the *posti distinti* (reserved seats) to fifteen francs, which measures, I am told, succeeded in indemnifying the *impresario* for the money laid out and produced a very good net profit, as the theatre was crammed from floor to ceiling, and crammed it remained, too, up to the last moment of the performance ; six long, mortal hours of musical rapture, unmitigated by the light fantastic toes of *ballerine*, or their still lighter and more fantastic petticoats, by aught, in fact, but the magic variety of sound and sentiment, that would have made of any other mitigation a profanation. The prima-donna, *la Signora Ferni*, I am told, was rapturously applauded, and seemed made expressly for the rôle of Selika. Full of power and passion, she idealized and sublimized her part, which was nobly dramatic, besides being divinely lovely in both her costumes, though most so in that of the slave. All the rôles were unusually well sustained and the harmony of the com-

position was not disturbed, as it is with us so frequently, by a great inferiority in the minor parts, fatal to dramatic illusion and effect. The great singer of the evening, however, was the baritone, *il Signor Giraldoni*, in the character of Nelusko, a true and great artist in every sense of the term, and to him the opera owes its greatest success. Again and again he was called upon the stage to respond to the frantic acclamations of the excited crowd, though evidently desirous of escaping a distinction he would have preferred to share.

But I refrain from a longer analysis of a performance of whose merits I am personally ignorant, until I can be something more than an echo of the public rapture, and return contentedly to my deserted tea-table, an account of which will initiate you into some of the difficulties, to which a disposition for hospitality exposes us birds on the wing, while temporarily perching in foreign lodging-houses. My friends, as I told you before, were invited for Saturday evening, and early on the morning of that day I commenced my

preparations for their reception, thinking, naturally enough, that they would be made in a twinkling; only twenty people were coming. But I had reckoned without my landlord, and was soon dismayed at the immensity of the task I had undertaken. Task! it was an enterprise! and courageous as I am (morally, I mean), I positively trembled when I found what was before me. I found there was nothing, just nothing in the house for my party. Few spoons, fewer cups and saucers, no chairs to speak of, table-cloths and napkins dilapidated and in tatters, and all the rest to match. Small prevision take lodging-house keepers of hospitable intentions. I was in despair, and would have postponed on the instant my tea-drinking to a more propitious occasion on the other side of the Atlantic, had it not been too late! Come my friends must and would, and with or without the needful, they must be received. No time was to be lost, help must be obtained, and the aid of friendly compatriots — they being lodging-house birds of the same feather as myself,

with nothing but their plumage that they could call their own, not to be thought of. So taking courage from desperation, I resolved to apply to my landlord, with what feelings you may imagine, when I tell you that one or two recent skirmishes with him on the subject of porters' fees and rights, and the amount of water necessary for the family use, questions on which we differed greatly, he believing firmly in limited and partial bathing, and my ideas taking a more comprehensive range, had somewhat acidulated our usually friendly relations. Nevertheless, it was no time to think of all that now. So I sent for him and laid the case before him. I told him that we Americans were a social, tea-drinking, agglomerating race, seizing on every pretext to gratify our national propensities, not doing at Rome as the Romans, but as the Bostonians do; and that it was a landlord's duty, with an American lodger in view, to take into consideration the national character and needs, and prepare his house accordingly, that is, supply it with an unlimited amount of cups, tea-

spoons, chairs, etc., all things indispensable to hospitable rites. I added, too, that were I speaking to any one but an Italian, I should demand a cradle and a rocking-chair. My eloquence succeeded. Awed either by the fire and force of audacity, that resides in the female American eye, or by compunction for past neglect, he succumbed at once, and though, when I asked for a table-cloth he gave me a sheet, it was not a bad substitute after all, and if I had only had guests, if the *impresario* of the Pergola had only the complaisance to defer for one evening his ill-timed performance, my twenty friends would have had a cup and a teaspoon apiece, and my tea-fight would have been the most brilliant reunion of the season.

Speaking of American receptions, I must tell you that last Monday evening I attended one at our clergyman's, the first of a series to be continued every Monday. The invitations were given from the pulpit, and extended indiscriminately to all the Americans in Florence, a surprising proceeding in one of our

compatriots, as of all people on the face of the earth, we are the most exclusive in our social relations, and to such a degree is this the case, that foreigners are constantly expressing their surprise at the rigor, with which what are called aristocratic distinctions, are maintained among us republicans! They know, of course, that with us as with others, social differences exist, but imposed upon by our pretended scorn of the grapes that refuse to grow in our climate, sincerely think that they are based upon a recognition of real superiority, intrinsic merit of some sort, independent of wealth, rank and position, and are excessively amused to find that the first care of an American abroad is to hunt up a genealogy! Good Heavens! say they, why does Mr. M——, whose father was a respectable oil merchant in Philadelphia, trouble himself to discover, on the strength of his very common name, that he is of Welsh origin and related to Lord Y——'s family. Why not be satisfied with his Quaker extraction, since we do not ask or expect Americans to be earls'

remotest cousins. And why, above all, will Mr. Z——, a man born in your American purple, a very different and superior stuff to our article, you pretend, wear it so humbly, so cringingly in presence of those clothed in the European fabric? Is it, then, in spite of Mr. Bright and Mr. Mill, a baser, coarser fabric after all? But, alas! digression, my besetting sin, "that fatal Cleopatra," has led me a weary length away from the limits of Mr. V. N's drawing-room, to which I am glad to get back, though it offered nothing to distinguish it from similar American reunions—the usual tea and cake, with the prettiest and best dressed women, the most sensible, thoughtful and earnest men, and over all a rather unusual degree of sociability and friendship, emanating probably from the warm, kind heart of our pastor, who recognizes in every man a brother, in every woman a sort of angel. Among those who seemed particularly to enjoy the cordiality of our welcome, I remarked an old gentleman, the striking and picturesque beauty of whose

head would have made a beautiful study for an artist. I learned, on enquiry, that he was the venerable Amos Kendall, to whom I obtained the honor of an introduction. He was traveling, he told me, partly for his health, which had been greatly benefited by the voyage, and his cough had wholly left him in Ireland. God grant that elsewhere he may leave his other complaints, and long may his precious life be preserved to those who love him. The party, being at a clergyman's, broke up early, as prolonged and godly enjoyments are generally thought incompatible, though what is to break the monotony of eternal blessedness, our pastors forget to tell us, and everlasting happiness hereafter has always been urged, as an argument for an early renunciation of the joys of time.

FLORENCE, October 28, 1866.

I walked to church this morning under the gay shadows of floating flags and waving tapestry—carpets, counterpanes, petticoats, every article, in short, that united the “red, white and green,” were dangling from the windows to *festeggiare* the “*Sì*” of the *plebiscite* that yesterday confirmed the union of Venetia with Italy. The bells rang out gaily at intervals and the people everywhere were in ecstasies of joy, translated, as usual, Italian fashion, into color, noise and movement; and by the end of next week half of Florence will betake itself with her King to Venice, where the old palace of the Doges is rapidly preparing for his reception. The King will be accompanied by a numerous and brilliant suite, the greater part of the foreign ministers of the number, and on Wednesday, the 7th, will make his public entry into the city of gondolas, where, if he can only continue to transmute “its stones” into gold, the joy with which all are preparing to welcome

him, will probably prove as durable as it is sincere and enthusiastic. As it is, however, the croakers already begin to predict a speedy reaction, when the unthinking people shall perceive that Victor Emmanuel is a man and not a magician.

Meanwhile the heart, head and soul of Italy being for the nonce in Venetia, the Florentine gossiping "*pot-au-feu*," less richly supplied than usual with savory ingredients for a correspondent's letter, simmers quietly over a fire kindled at too great a distance to set it boiling, and awaits the return of her sovereign, ere deigning to furnish forth a table fit to set before a king. Other "*pots-au-feu*," however, are not wanting in Florence, for the season of the *Scaldini*, the people's *pot-au-feu*, has set in, and as you may not know what *scaldini* are, I will tell you, that they are small earthen pots, filled with fine, ignited charcoal, called *brace*, with which Florentines keep soul and body together through the winter, in spite of carpetless rooms and few fire-places. 'Tis a convenience especially adapted to this

dolce far niente people, for having to be held in the hands, those members cannot be otherwise more usefully employed, and that they contribute to promote the national indolence with which I so heartily sympathize, believing as I firmly do, that with nations as with individuals, there are those, whose mission is simply "to be" not "to do," and foremost among these favored people I place the Italians. However that may be, certain it is that whether deserving or not all the merit I claim for them, the Italians couldn't get through the cold weather without their *scaldini*, and they are to be seen in everybody's hands and under everybody's feet, the women of the lower classes carrying them about with them everywhere, to market and in the churches even, cozily hidden under their shawls and aprons, and whether in a shop, an artist's studio, or a countess' drawing-room, the first thing offered you is a *scaldino*. Occasionally too, they are desecrated to more apparently useful purposes, and enclosed in a sort of hen-coop, they serve as

bed-warmers, while, covered with a small wire net-work, a *scaldino* becomes an ingenious little cooking stove, on which a *bistecca* of lamb, mutton or pork, can be cooked, and deliciously too, in a twinkling. (*Bistecca*, by the way, is the Italian for beefsteak, and it also means a cutlet of any sort or description.) Here, however, truth compels me to add, ends the list of the *scaldino's* merits, for as a domestic institution, I question greatly its utility, and fancy the home virtues flourish best beside a stationary chimney-corner; indeed I am often compelled to attribute a great deal of the out-of-door roving café-habits of the Italian husbands, to this will-o'-the-wisp, wandering, vagabond fireside, though it seems ungrateful in me to say it, as from September to June, no Italian of them all hugs this precious little convenience more closely to her bosom than my shivering self, and so indispensable has it become to my comfort, that in spite of my many hair-breadth escapes, (for I upset one on an average two or three times a day,) my friends predict that I

shall come to a fiery end at last, and "Not burnt to death yet," is the common form of salutation of several of them. So profound indeed is their conviction, that finally it has infected me, and wishing to be prepared for every emergency, I sat down the other day and wrote my epitaph, and hope, the case occurring, that it may serve as a warning to other devotees of the *pot-au-feu*.

I wonder, by the way, why people do not oftener take eternity by the forelock and write their own epitaphs! Fewer lies would, I am sure, be told, and the monotony of praise would at least occasionally be diversified by wholesome confession, as few people care much for posthumous reputation, and no one is bound to tread lightly over his own ashes! My epitaph runs thus, if you like to read it:

Here lies poor H— —, her age pray how should we
know,

The victim of an overturned scaldino.

When warned of what she might expect, she jeered,
Nor flames above, nor flames below she feared;
Heedless of counsel friends were always giving,

Hot water was her element while living,
And dying by the cruel, ruthless blaze,
In one more hot, we fear, she dwells always.
From mortal rushing to immortal ire,
Out of the frying-pan straight into the fire.

I don't pretend to give this as a model epitaph, though my friends think it pretty fair. An equal amount of sincerity on the part of the world in general would soon make of a graveyard an entertaining and instructive place, where "sermons in stones" could not be listened to with careless ears.

One thing naturally leading to another, I am glad to find that other people occasionally get into hot water as well as myself, and among them our prefect, Count Cantelli, who has just now got himself involved in a stupid, unreasonable quarrel with the proprietors of the Niccolini Theatre, about a box, that he insists upon having elsewhere than where they choose to give it to him. The affair is simply this: The present prefect, and his predecessors as well, have always had a box placed by the proprietors of the theatre at their disposition

on the third tier, and as it was in no case obligatory upon them to give *any* box, the former prefects have accepted it wherever they could get it, and been thankful enough to get it at all. Not so Count Cantelli; he insists upon having a *loge* on the first tier, and his pretensions being resisted, has actually refused to authorize the reopening of the theatre, though the bills of the company have actually been placarded all over the city for a performance next week. As both parties keep firm, and show no symptoms of yielding, the affair is getting serious, and will soon, I am told, be carried before the tribunals. But this is not all. Not content with one theatrical quarrel, our prefect has another on his hands, originating in similar pretensions with regard to the Alfieri Theatre, which will have to be settled in the same way, if his *prepotenza* does not succumb, as sooner or later they say he must. These theatrical brawls, by the way, are no novelty in Italy. Not long since an analogous event took place in Venice, when the Governor, Cavalier Toggembourg, made an indential

demand of the Malibran Theatre, and, like our prefect, refused to allow it to open. The *impresario* declined to make **any** concession and the theatre remained closed, the Austrian Governor fulfilling his threat. But in the mean time he telegraphed to Vienna for instructions. They came, and he was ordered to open the theatre, but at the same time to take the affair before the tribunal, and the result was that he had to give in, the court deciding against him. While writing this last paragraph a friend has come in, who informs me that the difficulty between the prefecture and the proprietors of the two theatres has been amicably settled. Count Cantelli has admitted that his pretensions were unfounded and removed his veto from the "Niccolini" and the "Alfieri;"—" *tant mieux pour lui !*"

This is now "*la belle saison*" for theatres of every description, and there is not one of them that is not filled to overflowing every evening. The *impresario* of the Pergola however, though the *Africaine* is as popular as

ever, has been compelled to reduce to the usual prices, as, after the first night it was performed to empty boxes. The Italians love music but only at a fair price. Catch them paying too dear for their whistles of any sort. Ristori's success in New York and elsewhere raises a smile on the faces of the real connoisseurs of the drama here. They think it strange that what, at its best, long, long years ago, was never genius, should excite such enthusiasm in its decline, and the transports of the critic of the New York Herald, who from various admiration points—now in the dress circle, now in the parterre, and anon armed with a promenade ticket, vented his delight in frantic *bravos* of a *female* performer, filled them with intense amazement. As if forsooth one could not be enraptured in spite of grammatical harmony and ignorance of the language. For my part I think nothing could have been more gratifying than this tribute to the woman, independent of the author she interpreted.

The desolating work of improvement still

goes on here with cruel celerity, and on emerging after a week's seclusion in the house, you discover architectural marvels equal to those accomplished in the same space of time in Chicago or St. Louis. Everywhere churches, palaces and cloisters in demolition, fill your nostrils and put your eyes out with the sacred dust of ages, and no one but the lonely lover of the past like myself, seems to heed the ruin. The Italians of to-day have no reverence for anything, and turn up as lightly the soil that contains the ashes of heroes and saints, as we do a potato field.

Dr. V. N——'s tea-parties still continue, theatres excepted, the only gayety we Americans just now indulge in. His wife has just returned and his reunions will probably be even more delightful than heretofore, as the most agreeable drawing-room in the world, without a lady in it to do the honors, is a setting without its gem.

Mr. Fox, the hero of the St. Petersburg and Moscow fêtes, arrived here yesterday, and the Legation and Consulate are in a state of

friendly and patriotic activity very pleasant to witness, and I hope it is agreeable to the object of it. I shouldn't like, though to have such a fuss made about me, and when I get famous I mean to retire to the desert.

FLORENCE, November 6, 1866.

Last Friday being the festival of the dead, *la festa di tutti morti*, in spite of a gloomy, sullen sky, threatening rain at every instant, I started for a visit to San Miniato al Monte, whose church and surrounding cemetery are at present the most fashionable receptacles for the dead in the neighborhood of Florence. Everybody who has visited this city will recall the view of San Miniato as seen from the center of Ponte Vecchio, and few travelers, however short their stay in the capital, fail to visit it. It is a beautiful church, of a simple and noble style of architecture, situated upon a hill on the east of Florence, and did it possess no other attraction than the

beautiful view from its terrace of the valley of the Arno, with its encircling mountains, it would be well worth visiting. But of course no Italian church can be so comparatively barren of interest, and that of San Miniato, like every other in this enchanted land, possesses its treasures of art, its legends, and its miracles, besides being especially famous for having been a military post, fortified by Michael-Angelo, in a vain attempt to defend Florence from the power of the Medici, in the last siege of the city. Truly, the dead should sleep contentedly in such illustrious dust, and were aught wanting to their sweet repose, methinks the tears, that so often moisten it, telling of living, undying affection, should satisfy the most exacting spirit. Thinking thus, I took my way out of the Porta San-Miniato, and soon found myself in the cypress-bordered avenue, the Via Crucis that leads to the church. The road was thronged with people, most of them in deep mourning garments, all wending their way to the church, carrying in their hands nosegays and

wreaths of flowers, with which to adorn graves, whose tenants, this beautiful custom of yearly commemoration, helps to keep fresh and vivid in their hearts. Many were the sad faces that I saw as I went on, many more, composed to a decent conventional gravity, and in all, the consciousness of mortality and its woes were more or less visible. Death at such times asserts his supremacy, and even a transient recognition of his might is beneficial in a community like this. Moreover a seed sown upon a grave occasionally blossoms into a plant of eternal life.

Hurrying rapidly on in spite of my reflections, for the rain drops already began to fall, I soon reached the church and, regardless of the lovely view to be seen from its terrace, entered its doors. The scene that met my eyes suffused them instantly with tears; the dead, the unforgotten dead were there; their shadows filled the church and seemed more real than the living mourners. The floor and walls of the church were covered with sepulchral slabs, and beside each taper-lighted,

flower-strewn grave, one or more dark-robed figures sat or knelt and prayed in a silence unbroken except by an occasional sigh or sob. Never have I witnessed a scene more impressive, though many a grand and striking pageant has passed before my eyes, and overcome by its sad and strange solemnity, I, too, flung myself upon my knees and mourned, ah how bitterly, *my* dead — father, sister, brother. They all came back to me, there in that strange church, in a foreign land! and amid the passionate weeping that the memory of their loss occasioned, they bade me hope! Ah! beautiful, blessed custom that thus keeps alive all that is holiest and best within us! Why canst thou not be transplanted to my own dear land, where mammon and materiality reign, alas, supreme? Why cannot we, too, occasionally steal a day from the market and exchange, to pass it with the angels? Vain wish, perhaps, and yet I cherish it. Linger long amid the sacred precincts, and leaving them at last unwillingly, warned by the gathering gloom, I

turned at last my face to the city, and taking the same cypress-bordered path, paused for a moment on my way down at the Franciscan Convent of San Salvatore del Monte, about half-way between San Miniato and Florence, where similar mournful ceremonies were taking place. This convent, like the church higher up, is rich in historical and poetical reminiscences, and its neighborhood is famous as the scene of the Call of San Giovanni Gualberto, one of those charming legends, that make almost every foot of Italian soil, a scene of romantic, haunting interest, beside which mere historical facts are poor and sterile. The story runs thus: The San Giovanni in question, the founder of the Benedictine Convent at Vallombrosa, was not, alas! always a saint; far from it, indeed, he was a noted sinner, and without a miracle, a sinner probably would have remained to his dying day. The son of a high and mighty baron, in riotous living he passed his time, disregarding alike the tears and entreaties of a pious mother, and the angry threats of a

stern father, till finally so completely did he abandon himself to vicious courses, that even among the dissolute he became renowned for the profligacy and infamy of his conduct.

Hopeless of any change, his father at last ceased to menace, his mother almost to pray, when Heaven took the prodigal in hand, and by means of a terrible domestic calamity, succeeded in bringing him to repentance. His brother, his only brother Hugh, was killed in a brawl, and so greatly was he affected by his loss, that renouncing on the instant every other pursuit, he swore to live for nothing but to punish his murderer and avenge his death. His gay companions, his beautiful mistresses, were sacrificed without a regret to the deadly passion that consumed him, and Providence, doubtless, assisting to bring about an event, that was destined to end in his conversion, soon placed the homicide within his reach. Returning one Good-Friday from San Miniato, accompanied, as usual, by a band of armed followers, he met the murderer in a narrow road from which there was no escape, and prepared to

put his terrible vow in execution, and would surely have done so had not his apparently doomed victim sunk upon his knees, and extending his arms towards him in the form of the Holy Cross, adjured him by the sacred symbol and the solemn memories of that blessed day, to have mercy upon him. His appeal was not made in vain. Gualberto relented, forgave his enemy, and more than that, taking him by the hand, he conducted him to the church of San Miniato, when upon coming before the crucifix above the altar, the head of our Saviour bowed to Gualberto in token of approval of his magnanimous act, which miracle so moved Gualberto, that on the instant he vowed to devote the rest of his life to God, and forthwith became a monk in the neighboring monastery. He did not remain there long however, for his piety, like that of so many others, making him critical and intolerant, he soon took umbrage at the free and jovial character of the Abbot, a philosopher in his way, who, from the gloom, even of a cloister, contrived to extract a few

sunbeams, and having particularly set his face against sunbeams, and looking upon the sun itself as an interloper and vagabond in Creation, San Giovanni Gualberto, in company with another monk of similar sourness of sentiment, shook the dust off his feet against the jolly abbot, and betook himself to the shades of Vallombrosa, where he established the Benedictine convent, that all the world goes to see, and set himself seriously to work at the extirpation of sunbeams, a task a good many of his Protestant brethren have like himself, undertaken, alas! too often successfully! too, too often! I have lingered so long among convents and tombs that I have hardly time for an account of a visit I paid yesterday morning to an establishment of a very different description, but very interesting also in its way. Furnished with a permit, I found my way yesterday morning to the royal manufactory of the *pietre dure* or Mosaics, in the via del Ciliegio, which is at this moment very busily occupied in the preparation of objects for the coming exhibition of

Paris. Everybody has of course seen and probably possessed specimens of Florentine Mosaics, but to see them in perfection, to know what is possible in a combination of stones of different colors, one should visit this establishment, where a judicious choice can be made of several different stones, whose varied shades, arranged with patient and minute attention, produce an effect that only the finest painting can equal. The tables they are making for the exhibition are just simply marvelous, and the price of one of them, one hundred and seventeen thousand francs, seems anything but astonishing—one especially of porphyry, in the middle of which were all sorts of bacchanal attributes, surrounded by a border of flowers that were positively fragrant. I spent two hours looking at the beautiful things, my eyes growing brighter and wider open as I looked, and I only regretted, as I came away, that I was not a Stewart or a Rothschild. As I hear that the former is going to Paris on the occasion of the exhibition, I hope he will purchase some of

these exquisite objects of art, for such they are, attaining the beau-ideal, art's proper object.

Yesterday morning our minister, Mr. Marsh, accompanied by Capt. Fox, of the Navy, Mr. Clay, our Secretary of Legation, and the most efficient of its attachés, left Florence, I am told, to meet the King on his entrance into Venice. It was whispered about, however, in the course of the day, that the King had been taken suddenly ill, and his entrance would have to be postponed, but as no confirmation of the rumor appeared in the evening papers, it was probably a false report. Another bit of gossip was that the Crown-Prince had made a morganatic marriage.

FLORENCE, November 24, 1866.

In spite of every effort of the municipality to the contrary, the King's reception to his Capital last Thursday was a complete failure. The city had outdone itself in preparations. Night and day for more than a week, workmen had been employed in its decoration, but vain were triumphal arches, waving flags, winged lions, trophied arms, tapestried glories of every description; vain the Syndic's prayers, almost commands, to the people to be enthusiastic, loyal, and *empressé*. The King passed through the resplendent streets, unwelcomed by the hearts of his subjects, and took his sullen way through the midst of the crowds, assembled to see the show, with scarcely an *evviva* to greet his return. It is said, even, that on his arrival at the Piazza Pitti, he was saluted with hisses instead. Many reasons for this strange dissatisfaction besides the memories of Custoza and Lissa have been alleged. The King is reproached with partiality for Turin, his ancient capital,

with receiving there instead of at Florence, the Venetian deputation, but, above all, with his *entourage* of *mauvais sujets*. And though it is asserted that Cialdini, the people's favorite, has consented to accept the place of first aide-de-camp to his Majesty, on condition of making a clean household, and turning out the civil and military officers, that at present disgrace it, until the thing is done as well as said, the Florentines will not cease to doubt the King. To all these legitimate causes of discontent, add that on Thursday he was two hours later than he was expected, and the absence of *evvivas* is sufficiently accounted for, as it is only the loved and popular who are watched and waited for with patient impatience. It was one o'clock instead of eleven, the hour fixed, when the cannons of the fortress announced his arrival at the station, where all the grand dignitaries of the city and many others beside, were awaiting him, and the train had scarcely reached the depot, when Baron Ricasoli approached the door of the royal wagon with outstretched hand, to

welcome him, to which his Majesty responded, Italian fashion, by a cordial kiss on each cheek, a salutation he graciously extended to the five cabinet ministers accompanying Signor Ricasoli, and afterwards shook hands with several others, entitled by rank or position to the distinction of a personal greeting, the young princes following his example. The King then entered a magnificently furnished pavilion, especially prepared for the occasion, where several ladies were in waiting, one of whom presented him with an exquisite bouquet, tied with the national colors, which he received with his accustomed gallantry and kept in his hand until he reached the Pitti, and then, leaving the pavilion, he slowly proceeded, bowing right and left, to his carriage, and commenced his progress through the city, which, as I said before, was anything but a triumphant one. He was followed by several other carriages, with the royal liveries, conveying ministers, generals, deputies, court officials, and other notabilities, in their proper order and precedence, though what that may

be, I do not exactly know. At the right of the King sat the Crown Prince, Umberto, and two aides-de-camp facing them on the front seat. In the next carriage was Amadeo, Victor Emmanuel's second son, with the Prince Carignano (cousin to Victor Emmanuel) and another aide. Three uglier human beings than the King and his two sons, it would be difficult even among crowned heads to discover. Amadeo, especially, seemed a sort of skeleton parody of humanity, beside whom, the King, coarse and unrefined as he is in appearance, looked almost distinguished. I had gone early to our Consulate in Via Maggio, in order to secure an uncontested place at one of its two windows, and amuse myself with watching the crowd, a little before the arrival of the royal cortége.

The sight that met my eyes as I turned from the *Idrucciola de' Pitti* into the street, was enlivening and animating to the last degree, though the decorations that excited my admiration were not perhaps in the best possible taste, "*N'importe.*" The façades of

the houses were in a perfect glory of green, white and red, and the street below was literally dark with the shade of innumerable flags that were suspended on cords from one side of it to the other. It looked for all the world as if there had been a grand national wash, and all the banners of the country had been hung out in Via Maggio to dry. It was enchanting—the flowers, the flags, the crowd, the movement, more than all the view of our own dear, old “Stars and Stripes,” waving proudest among them all, roused in me such a ferment of patriotism, both foreign and domestic, that I could scarcely await the King’s coming to exhale it. My pocket-handkerchief commenced instinctively waving, *evvivas* were bursting from my lips, and blessings from my heart, when the attitude of the people collected in the street, all at once threw a wet blanket upon my enthusiasm. It was really too bad; why couldn’t they, Italians, be sympathizing, and gushing, when I, an American, who had no particular call to be excited, was overflowing with emotion. I knew as well as

they did that Victor Emmanuel didn't deserve any homage, but how few heroes ever do, and many a heart would rest forever motionless and dumb, if desert only could stir it into life, so I still said "*Evviva it Rè*," and would not allow my heart to cool down to the popular level. I waved my handkerchief and flung a little bouquet at the King as he passed, and though he paid no particular attention to either of these manifestations, and seemed supremely indifferent at the same time, to the evidences of his people's dissatisfaction, my conscience at least was clear, and I had nothing to reproach myself with, if dislike on one side and indifference on the other marked Victor Emmanuel's reception in Florence where, to my thinking, Leopold II still reigns supreme. In the evening there was an illumination, finer than anything that has been seen here for years. That, in spite of the rain, crowds flocked to see. Oh, how beautiful it was! The outlines of the principal edifices in this lovely mediæval city, the glorious Duomo, the graceful Campanile, the

curious course of the Arno, seemed garlanded with incandescent jewels, tracing their perfect forms in lines of fire, and a blaze of light from almost every house in the city, transformed its stone and marble palaces into habitations fit for the genii of Oriental tradition. But I will not attempt to describe it, for no words can ever do it justice or convey an idea of its marvelous effect. Whether the King saw it or not I do not know, but think it more probable that he was in bed and asleep, dreaming perhaps, of Rosina, his morganatic bride.

Speaking of kings, princes and the like, I read in this morning's paper an explanation of the report, relative to the Prince of Wales' death, which resulted from a mistake in a telegram announcing that "the Prince's skill in riding was greatly admired," which in Frenchified English was read, "the Prince *is kill*," and led to the mistake that sent for a day and a half all the Florentine English into mourning. A report of less importance, but greater authenticity, that has already been alluded to in some of the English papers, was confirmed

to me to-day by official authority, which is, the presence in Italy of Surratt, one of the conspirators of Lincoln's assassination, who has been in the country for several months under the name of Watson, dressed in the uniform of a papal Zouave. His presence in Naples was recently telegraphed to our Consul in that city from our Minister at Rome, with the order to arrest him if possible, which unfortunately was impossible, as it was discovered that he had already left for Alexandria in a steamer that sailed the evening before, Saturday, November 17th, and was to touch at Malta, on which our Neapolitan Consul telegraphed to his brother official at Malta, informing him of the fact and reiterating the order for his arrest. It has since been discovered that Surratt came to Naples as long ago as the 8th of November, without a passport, but stating that he was an Englishman escaped from a Roman regiment. He professed to be without money, and at his own request was lodged in prison, when his conduct exciting suspicion, a sort of surveillance

was kept over him and attempts were made to discover who and what he was. To the questions asked him from time to time, he replied that he was a Canadian, that he had been living in Rome nearly a year, when his resources becoming exhausted, he had enlisted in the papal Zouaves, and having been put into prison for insubordination, had escaped from a window and injured his back and arm in so doing. He remained in the Naples prison three or four days, when apparently tired of the confinement, he requested to be taken to the British Consulate, and went there accompanied by a policeman, when he complained of the treatment he had received, and claimed his release on the ground of being a British subject. In the meantime the police had found twelve *scudi* in his possession, and when asked why, having money, he wished to go to prison, he replied that he wanted to save it. His story and appearance, for it is said that he is very good-looking, and, above all, his quality of British subject, immediately enlisted the sympathies of the English at

Naples, and money was raised to pay his passage to Alexandria, to which was added a small sum to provide for his most pressing wants on his arrival there. He left for that place in the steamer of Saturday, the 17th, and as in case of the telegram reaching Malta too late for his arrest there, a similar despatch was to be transmitted to Alexandria, it is probable that ere this, the miserable creature has been arrested.

FLORENCE, December 10, 1866.

To a vain, pretty woman, a walk through the streets of Florence must be a very agreeable event. A triumphant monarch's progress is hardly more prolific of homage, and if, by any almost impossible combination of circumstances, such an one had hitherto been unconscious of the power and quality of her charms, a half hour's promenade on the *Lung' Arno*, or through any of the other principal thoroughfares of Florence, would most pleasantly dispel her ignorance. The Florentines, as

every one knows, are a demonstrative people, but whether the men are really more sensible here than elsewhere to the attractions of beauty, or only more independent, I can't pretend to say. Certain it is, that they express their admiration with a freedom unknown in other parts of the earth, from which its object can only escape, by a speedy return to the family nest. Of course this out-spoken admiration is excessively disagreeable to its victims—indeed, they say it is—and yet, considering the indignation it excites, it is surprising to observe how patiently it is borne. I have known indignant beauties come home furious from a morning stroll, who declared that they would shut themselves up forever, stay at home like cloistered nuns all their lives, rather than expose themselves to such impertinence, whom the next fair day saw parading the same streets, apparently quite resigned to endure its repetition. One young girl in particular I remember, whose rage at being told on one of these occasions that she was a "*bell' angelo*," was something quite ludicrous.

"*Bell' angelo !*" she exclaimed, "how dare he—the wretch! Oh, if I were only a man! But, girl as I am, he shall have a taste of my parasol if I ever meet him again!" In short the *bell' angelo's* wings were so fiercely ruffled, that I seriously believed she would never spread them again in a Florentine sky, and was never more surprised in my life than to meet her only two days later, unaccompanied by pater-familias, with a parasol indeed, which did its duty faithfully in keeping off the sun in the firmament, but had never interposed, as far as I could learn, between her and any son of man. She was a modest girl, too, but the most modest of the sex loves admiration, and will not reject it, though picked up in the streets, a fact of which American husbands seem strangely unconscious, when they send their young and pretty wives without protection, to this land of gallantry and intrigue, where love-making is the principal manufacture of the country, and one in which most of its children are accomplished proficient—an imprudence of which I am reminded by

the well known fact, that several of the matrimonial disasters that have befallen two or three of our confiding stay-at-home countrymen of late, have had their origin in these chance street encounters. But, again, apropos to them, I must not forget to add that these running comments are not always confined to beauty, or invariably of a flattering description; things not particularly pleasant are oft-times heard by the greedy vain ones, and, above all things, an eccentric or unusual toilette is sure to excite remarks more promotive of good taste than good temper, for a woman any day would rather have her eyes condemned than her bonnet, and beauty, itself, if ill-dressed, cannot escape sarcastic criticism. I never shall forget seeing once upon a time a lovely young girl, actually crying with shame and vexation at the observations provoked by a *Nizzarda* hat (a Nice hat) that the poor thing wore for the first time; "Oh, my eye!" cried one of the tormentors, "look at that soup plate." "'Tis not a soup plate," said his companion, "it's only a famous

big mushroom that the girl has got on." One *gamin* told her that she looked like a Chinese. Another considerably advised her "not to trouble herself to buy a parasol;" and though these criticisms did not proceed from patrician lips, they were none the less provoking, and I didn't wonder at the maiden's tears.

But a truce to Italians and their impertinent and naughty ways. I went last evening to Mrs. Van Nest's weekly reception, where a greater number than usual of our compatriots were assembled, for the drawing-room was already overflowing into the study, as I entered early in the evening. How merry every one seemed. All the world was laughing, talking, and chattering together, in a manner so unusually animated and sprightly, that I could only account for it, by remembering that joyous, merry Christmas was at hand, reason enough indeed for gayety! The blessed anniversary is this year to be celebrated with unusual pomp and circumstance in our church. In fact, during Mr. H—'s reign, it was never celebrated at all, and the day passed, as to

church commemoration, wholly unnoticed. Now we are to have a Christmas-tree for the children, and as the young scions of native growth are not particularly numerous, the children connected with the Vaudoise church are to be invited to share its delights. The ladies of our church are consequently in a delightful state of benevolent activity, and no wonder that the chatter was gayer and the laugh louder than usual in Mrs. Van Nest's pleasant drawing-room. I was introduced in the course of the evening to a certain grave—no—he was not grave, but how like a burr certain epithets do stick to certain conditions and callings,—but to a decidedly gay Greek professor, I am happy to say, with whom I had such a delightful conversation, and who talked as well as if he had never seen the inside of a university, Professor M—, of Chicago. How we did talk! Nothing was too high or too low for our tongues; we wandered among the stars, not disdainful of the pebbles at our feet. Naturally enough, we did homage to the mighty dead, whose tombs are in our midst,

that he had that morning visited—Michael-Angelo, Dante, Galileo—a galaxy of glory—and he told me that the four hours spent in Santa Croce seemed hardly one, so absorbed was he in his homage to genius and the reminiscences it inspired—an oblivion I certainly could not have shared this cold weather, and that in his case was nourished undoubtedly by a warm overcoat and thick soled boots. Thus discoursing of one thing and another, from the pure intellectual empyrean, we gradually and safely descended to the regions of the tea-table, and I defied him to guess what Mrs. Van Nest had in store for us. He tried once. “No.” Again. “Oh dear, no, how can you be so dull?” A third time. “No, no, no!” Farther than ever from the mark, like a true philosopher and Greek professor that he was, for had the secret been hidden in the clouds, or buried in the bowels of the earth, he would soon have brought it to light. So, at last, tired of vainly guessing, he gave it up and I turned to his wife,—just the wife, by the way, for a Greek professor—so gay, sunshiny and

merry,—and she on the instant, divined the enigma! “Doughnuts!” she cried triumphantly, and doughnuts it was. But even she did not conjecture all the delicious truth, and that “riz” doughnuts were in store for our patrician palates!—The “riz” doughnut being to the ordinary articles of the same name, what the spiritual is to the carnal, a sort of glorified edible, more properly qualified perhaps as “risen doughnuts,” what we might suppose a doughnut in short to be after its resurrection.

Since I wrote you last, the society for the encouragement of the fine arts has opened its halls to the public and the exhibition has a special interest this year, as being a rendezvous for the display of the works that are to be sent to the Universal Exposition at Paris. I had only time the morning I visited it, to run through the halls, but it struck me that the paintings especially, were superior to those of the two preceding years, that a visible progress had been made, doubtless due to the noble and inspiring influences of patriotism

since the transfer of the capital to Florence; that conventionalism and mannerism were yielding to a more conscientious study of nature. Here and there a marked individuality was revealed, and particularly was it visible in a picture representing the abduction of a young girl, Bianca Capello, by Pietro Buonaventuri, at the moment of her departure from the paternal mansion. Her face is turned to the home of her childhood, while resting tenderly and confidingly upon her lover's shoulder, and nothing can be more pathetically touching than the struggle between passionate first-love and filial duty. Pity it is that a knowledge of the real facts of the case should destroy the charm, and that history, pitiless and unromantic, has destroyed forever all illusion with regard to this famous heroine of the chisel and brush. There is also at the exhibition a fine life-size study of Garibaldi, seated and apparently in a reverie. What are his dreams? Italy doubtless is in his thoughts, but only the gods can fathom the pure depths of a hero's heart.





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